

तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय

SANTINIKETAN  
VISWA BHARATI  
LIBRARY

093

M 82

V. I















# FRANCE.

BY

L A D Y M O R G A N.

*FOURTH EDITION.*



IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

---

Pourvu que je ne parle en mes écrits, ni de l'autorité, ni du culte, ni de la politique, ni de la morale, ni des gens en place, ni des corps en crédit, ni de l'opéra, ni des autres spectacles, ni de personne qui tienne à quelque chose ; je puis tout imprimer librement, *sous l'inspection de deux ou trois censeurs.*

MARIAGE DE FIGARO.

---

# FRANCE.

BY

LADY MORGAN.

---

Chaque jour de ma vie est une feuille dans mon livre.

THOMAS.

---

Che se tillession, comentio, o glossa,  
Faccio talor sopra il brutal governo.  
Lo fo, perche ciascu confrontar possa  
Con quei tempi antichissimi il moderno,  
Onde felicitarsi appien possiamo  
*Dei fortunati secoli in cui siamo.*

CASTI. *Gli Animali Parlanti.*

Canto xyiii. Stroph 106.

---

FOURTH EDITION.

WITH ADDITIONAL NOTES.

---

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

---

---

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR HENRY COLBURN,

PUBLIC LIBRARY, CONDUIT-STREET, HANOVER-SQUARE.

1818.

---

B. CRARKE, Printer, Well-street, London.

# PREFACE

## TO THE FIRST EDITION.

---

I OFFER the following work to public notice, with feelings of great intimidation and distrust. To an undertaking, at once arduous and delicate, I have brought none of those advantages most favourable to the *mechanism* of authorship; and in a series of narrated observations, over whose dryness the graces of fiction shed no extraneous charm, I have unavoidably been denied the *time* for leisurely composition. For it was necessary, from the nature of the work, intended to reflect the changeful images of the day, and in their true character and colouring,

“ To catch, if I could, the *Cynthias* of the minute,”  
to preserve the passing fact in the strength of its original occurrence; to forestall anecdote and anticipate detail, ere the rapid current of public events should force them through the various channels of society, and lessen their value by extending their circulation.



that in the omniscience of its judgment, it can stoop

“To break a butterfly upon a wheel.”

It is now nearly nine years since that review selected me as an example of its unsparing severity; and, deviating from the true object of criticism, made its strictures upon one of the most hastily composed and insignificant of my *early* works, a vehicle for an unprovoked and wanton attack upon the personal character and principles of the author. The slander thus hurled against a young and unprotected female, struggling in a path of no ordinary industry and effort, for purposes sanctified by the most sacred feelings of nature, happily fell hurtless. The public of an enlightened age, indulgent to the critical errors of pages, composed for its amusement, under circumstances, not of vanity or choice, but of *necessity*, has, by its countenance and favour, acquitted me of those charges under which I was summoned before their awful tribunal, and which tended to banish the accused from society, and her works from circulation: for “licentiousness, profligacy, irreverence, blasphemy, libertinism, disloyalty, and atheism,” were

no venial errors. Placed by that public in a definite rank among writers, and in no undistinguished circle of society; alike as *woman* and as author, beyond the injury of malignant scurrility, whatever form it may assume; I would point out to those who have yet to struggle through the arduous and painful career that I have ran, the feebleness of unmerited calumny; and encourage those who receive with patience and resignation the awards of dignified and legitimate criticism, to disregard and condemn the anonymous slander, with which party spirit arms its strictures, under the veil of literary justice.

In thus recurring to the severe chastisement which my early efforts received from the judgment of the Quarterly Review, it would be ungrateful to conceal that it placed

“ My bane and antidote at once before me,”  
and that in accusing me of “ licentiousness, profligacy, irreverence, blasphemy, libertinism, disloyalty, and atheism,” it presented a *nostrum* of universal efficacy, which was to transform my *vices* into *virtues*, and to render me, in its own words, “ not indeed a good writer of novels, but a *useful friend*,

most vital existence, but far beyond my limited sphere of enquiry. At my request, my husband has undertaken to furnish some sketches on these points, which form the pages of the appendix to the second volume.

For the authenticity of the great mass of anecdotes with which I have endeavoured to relieve the weariness of narrative, I can no further vouch, than that I obtained them from persons distinguished by their rank, talents, and high respectability; and that I give them as I heard them in the saloon or the boudoir. I have omitted many that were doubtful, even though they were amusing; and I have transcribed few that were not corroborated by persons of very different principles and interests. My object was to come at the *truth*, and I trust I have pretty generally succeeded.

# PREFACE

## TO THE THIRD EDITION.

---

THE publication of a Third Edition of 'France' has enabled its author to correct many errors of typography, which uncontrollable circumstances of time and place had introduced into the former impressions. Some, also, of the less pardonable mistakes, *quos incuria fudit*, have been rectified and cancelled; and it is hoped that the work will now prove more worthy to meet the eye of that public, whose protection has borne it through the fiery ordeal of factious politics, and reversed the decisions of *ex parte* judgments.

It may be expected, that a detailed notice should be taken of the calumnies and misrepresentations, which have been launched against these volumes, and their author; but many reasons dissuade from the adoption of such a course. In the first place, the public have already decided the question. The sale of the work has kept pace with the persevering malignity of its assailants; and a very marked expression of public feeling has condemned the undignified and captious censures of its professed detractors.

There is indeed but one subject upon which it

would become the author to touch ; for in all that respects *mere criticism*, the reader *will* judge for himself ; and as for the professional critics, it is “ both safest and best,”

“ If wrong to smile, if right to kiss the rod.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Commas and points* they set exactly right,  
And 'twere a sin to rob them of their mite.”

To the accusation, however, of impiety and blasphemy, so vehemently urged against this work, a reply did seem necessary ; and an answer was meditated, as to a point of some consequence to public interests ; but recent events have opened the eyes of all classes to the scope of such charges, to the unparalleled hypocrisy and matchless impudence with which they have been multiplied, for the most abandoned political purposes ; and the unpleasant task of self-justification, so humiliating in the execution, and so tiresome in the perusal, has thus been rendered altogether superfluous. The artifice lies open and exposed to view, and every honest man, whatever may be his political feelings, will join in its execration, as injurious to morals, dangerous to the state, and a libel on good government.

That political reflections should be mixed with a work like ‘ France,’ was inevitable. A profound sense of the fatal consequences attendant upon the prevalence of certain opinions influenced the author in its composition, and she has given to it

the political colouring, which proceeded from conviction. She has described what she saw ; she has spoken as she felt ; and if her opinions are erroneous, they are unbought and independent. She has been represented as anti-national : she wished only to give a more social, a more *European* turn, to the habitual feelings of her countrymen. She has been accused of impiety : she bore witness only against an hypocritical zeal, and the perversion of religion. To the enemies of religious freedom and a constitutional government alone she has given *designed offence* ; and to them she is not disposed to make apology or justification. Thus much being premised, the reader is respectfully referred for a very few more particular observations to the additional notes ; which have been subjoined in sport, or in indignation, according as a sense of the vileness of the attack, or of the mischief of its intention, happened to be prevalent at the moment of composition.

T. C. M.

*Kildare Street, 1st Jan. 1818.*

# ERRATA.

## VOL. I.

Page	Line	for	read
11	5	lighten	lightened
17	15	victory,	victory.
118	4	peasant	peasants
140	22	Charmont	charment
153	15	political	politically
161	2	Abou	Abon
180	4	cay	cy
202	23	lever	levee
209	4	cometes	cornettes
239	17	militante	deletante
247	3	stimulous	stimulus
247	5	Dehli	Dalai
335	6	blotted	blurted
373	4	from the bottom	generals
			sentinels

# CONTENTS.

## BOOK I.

### THE PEASANTRY.

*The Peasantry before the Revolution.*—*Condition of the Peasantry arising out of the Revolution.*—*The Labourers.*—*Farmers.*—*Small Proprietors.*—*Military Labourers.*—*Farmer of D'Orsonville.*—*Cottager of the Vallée of D'Orsai.*—*Rural Economy.*—*Market Day at Montreuil.*—*Peasant Dwelling.*—*Morals.*—*Domestic Manners and Affections.*—*Religion.*—*Religious Processions.*—*Popular Superstitions.*—*Diet.*—*Hospitality.*—*Mendicity.*—*Charity.*—*Costume.*—*Physiognomy.*—*The Basque.*—*Summary.* . . . . . page 3

## BOOK II.

### SOCIETY.

*National Characteristics*    *Sketch of Manners, before the Revolution* — *During the Revolution.*— *Under the Imperial Government.*—*Actual State of Society and Manners, in France.*—“*The Children of the Revolution.*”—*Royalists.*—*Ultra-Royalists.*—*Constitutionatists, and Buonapartists.*—*Conversation.*—*Raconteurs.*—*Political Vaudevilles.*—*Tone of the Circles.*—*French Youth.*—*The Elève of the Polytechnic School.*—*Religious Institutions.*—*School of Ecouen.* . . . . . 145



## BOOK III.

## S O C I E T Y.

<i>Woman.—Her former Influence, and actual Position in French Society.—National Characteristics.—Madame D'Houdetot.—Married Life — Gallantry, Manners, Education.—Domestic Habits.—The Femme de Chambre.—La Bonne.—Domestic Servitude.—The Toilette.—The Royal Trousseau.</i>	269
---	-----

## BOOK IV.

## PARIS.

<i>Habits of the Parisian Table.—Petits-Soupers.—Déjeuners à la fourchette.—Château de Plaisance.—Vincennes.—Chapelle expiatoire.—Hospitality.—Dinners.—The Soirée.—The grande Réunion.—The Bal Paré.</i>	381
---	-----

# FRANCE.

---

## BOOK I.

---

### PEASANTRY.

“ L’homme doit pouvoir déployer ses facultés, disposer de ses richesses, pourvoir à ses besoins, avec une liberté entière. L’intérêt général de chaque société, loin d’ordonner d’en restreindre l’exercice, défend au contraire d’y porter atteinte ; et dans cette partie de l’ordre public, le soin d’assurer à chacun les droits qu’il tient de la nature est encore à la fois la seule politique utile, le seul devoir de la puissance sociale, et le seul droit que la volonté générale puisse légitimement exercer sur les individus.”

CONDORCET, Progrès de l’Esprit.



# FRANCE.

---

## BOOK I.

---

### THE PEASANTRY.

*The Peasantry before the Revolution.—Condition of the Peasantry arising out of the Revolution.—The Labourers.—Farmers.—Small Proprietors.—Military Labourers.—Farmer of D'Orsonville.—Cottager of the Vallée of D'Orsai.—Rural Economy.—Market Day at Montreuil.—Peasant Dwelling.—Morals.—Domestic Manners and Affections.—Religion.—Religious Processions.—Popular Superstitions.—Diet.—Hospitality.—Mendicity.—Charity.—Costume.—Physiognomy.—The Basque.—Summary.*

**POLITICAL** revolution, the inevitable result of undue preponderance in some order of the state in which it occurs, presents, in the moral subversion it occasions, an image of those fearful symptoms, by which nature in her great volcanic struggles rights herself, and vindicates her violated laws; and the

convulsions of disorganizing matter best typify the throes and efforts of social and political dissolutions. Fermentation works alike in both ; destructive particles are forced to the surface ; much of what is good is overwhelmed in the impetuosity of the torrent ; much of what is bad reigns paramount through its hour of necessary agency. The evil, however, which caused the explosion, is at length removed ; and these tumultuous actions, subsiding into quiescence, terminate by a necessary causation in the re-establishment of harmony and order. A new form of things presents itself ; new arrangements arise out of the elementary wreck of exhausted systems ; and in political, as in natural science, new facts are inscribed on the tables of human experience ; new combinations extend the sphere of human views ; and new lights beam upon the collected mass of human knowledge, to correct its theories and to fortify its conclusions.

When the burning floods and frightful explosions of Vesuvius poured ruin and desolation on every object within the sphere of its convulsed action, the elder Pliny was seen exposing himself to its varied forms of danger, in the cause of knowledge, and for the

benefit of his species; his spirit soaring in sublimity above the wreck of matter, as nature, with all her awful secrets, stood revealed before him. But to the greatest political explosion that time has ever witnessed, or history recorded; to the revolution of France, few philosophical Plinys have brought their cool and unbiassed scrutiny. The event which has shaken the greatest dynasties of the earth, torn the creed of the most powerful religion, subdued opinions coeval with record, and weakened ties twisted with the very instincts of nature, has rarely been viewed through any medium, but that of passion, or discussed in any language, but that of prejudice.

It has, indeed, in its progress, been contemplated with well-merited horror. It has dazzled the visionary, it has frightened the timid. The oppressor and the oppressed have alike turned its events to their purpose; to exhibit it as a warning, or to seize upon it as an example. But while history with her impartial testimony exposes the causes of the French revolution, in the increasing abuses of the government, and in the consequent demoralization of the people, its effects on the nation, out of whose wrongs it arose, are only

to be estimated in the interior of society, and in the detailed minutiae of every-day existence. It is by an intimate acquaintance with the changes impressed upon all the various conditions and classes of the population, that its good and evil can alone be appreciated; and when prejudice disfigures, and policy misrepresents, philanthropy will exultingly point to domestic ameliorations, and philosophy triumph in the justification of her theories.

“ Liberty and property,” says Voltaire, “ is the cry of the English; it is the cry of nature:” and he adds, in his own peculiar style, “ *Il vaut mieux que St. George et mon droit; St. Denis et mont joie.*” To the oppressed and miserable peasantry of France all natural expression was denied. With every feeling of humanity violated, with every social institute perverted, they had learned by experience that complaint was unavailing, and resistance ruin.\* An event, however,

---

\* See Les Dictionnaires des Fiefs de M. de Treminville, et de Renaudon.

The resistance made in La Bretagne, under the reign of Louis XIV. to the tyranny and insupportable exactions of the government, was punished with a severity that approached to *extermination*! The city of Rennes

occurred, which, forwarded by their wrongs, was destined to work their redemption ; and the total overthrow of that frightful system of feudality, which had so long crushed them into slavery, was among the first and best works of the revolution. To form a just idea of the magnitude and proportions of the giant structure, as it stood, frowning over the waste it had occasioned, the production of a few scattered fragments will suffice ; nor is any minute detail of its complicated deformities necessary to excuse or to justify the reaction, which followed evils so harshly inflicted, and so patiently sustained.

The *corvée* (which, in giving France such noble roads, robbed the peasant of his sole possessions, his time and his labour) tore him not unfrequently from his family and home to labour in a distant province ; nor were the direct evils belonging to this system the only means of oppression to its victims. The *corvée*, in the hands of petty tyranny, became a convenient instrument to hold out as a threat, or to inflict as a punish-

---

was nearly depopulated ; and the troops were every where let loose, to commit every species of violence on the defenceless inhabitants.



ment; and occasionally it was even applied to remove an uncomplying husband or vigilant father from the protection of his family, and the vindication of his honor.

The *droit de chasse*, while it ravaged the fields, destroying the full half of their produce, estimated the life of a hare above the liberty of a man; and where want afforded such irresistible impulses to violate its enactments, bound its victims, for a conventional offence, to the oar of a galley.

The *droit coutumier*, or code of customary

---

\* "When I had a house at Epinay, sur Seine," said an English friend of mine, who resided in France before the Revolution, "I observed every day a large water cart brought from the river to the house of the Marechal D'Aubeterre, who resided near me, and drawn by six men in harness. On enquiry, I found that these yoke-mates had killed some of the marshal's game, and that he had thus commuted their sentence, instead of removing them from their families to the galleys at Marseilles."

*Additional Note.*] The French critics have blamed this observation, as coming with an ill grace from a British subject. Once for all, the author begs to state, that an invidious comparison between the two nations was not the object of her work. In presenting to the contemplation of her countrymen some errors in foreign institutions, she hoped rather to draw their attention to domestic amelioration, than to administer food, for ill-natured reflection, or misplaced self-complacency,

law, varied in every province; and by its uncertainty and disagreement with itself, multiplied the evils of litigation to the poor, and frequently extinguished even the hope of justice to the wronged.

Of the *gabelle*, so oppressive in its exactions as to become a spectre to the imaginations of the ignorant and the poor, it is impossible to give an adequate representation. Whatever was most tyrannical in government, and most absurd in morals, was to be found in the enactments calculated to raise the revenue, and ensure the collection of this detestable tax. Every morsel of meat the peasant might possess was previously estimated, and his consumption of salt, the excised commodity, regulated by computation. The smallest infringement of the dreadful code was unpityingly punished by confinement, (temporary, or for life) on board the gallees.\* Every thing, therefore, that appeared amongst the simple peasantry, either novel or mysterious, goading or insupportable, was placed

---

\* Des enfans de treize ans, condamnés aux galères, pour avoir été trouvés avec leurs pères, convaincus de contrebande.—Voilà le code du fisc; voilà l'indulgence pour le fisc; on lui a vendu le sang innocent! et on se tait!—*Dupaty Lettres sur l'Italie.*

in their apprehension to the account of the *gabelle*.\*

The *tithe*, that vexatious tax upon the most laborious class of society, for the support and luxury of the most indolent, was rendered more burthensome, from the multitude of other imposts which fell upon the cultivator.

The *taille*, and indeed the whole direct taxation of the kingdom, fell exclusively upon the people, the estates and persons of the privileged classes being wholly exempt from imposition. The personal slavery of a large portion of the population, especially in *Franche Comté*, of which the clèrgy held a considerable portion in *main morte*, embraced in itself all that was most odious in the legal, sanctioned outrages upon human reason and human feeling, all the multiplicity of oppression which filled up the code of feudal rights. The peasantry, thus abandoned to contempt and to neglect, and cultivating a plenteous

---

\* “ Un curé avoit reçu, devant ses paroissiens, une *pendule*. Ils se mirent tous à crier,” que c’étoit *la gabelle*, et qu’ils le voyoient fort bien. “ Le curé habile leur dit, et sur le même ton, point du tout, mes enfans, ce n’est pas *la gabelle*, c’est *le jubilé*. En même tems les voilà tous à genoux. Que dites-vous du bon esprit de ces gens là ?”

*Lettres de Sevigné*, vol. iii.

soil for others, which they could never hope to reap for themselves, submitted from generation to generation with a debasing acquiescence to their iron destiny; and though they lighten the burthen of a miserable existence by constitutional gaiety; though they sung in chains and danced in rags; yet how sensibly they suffered, was marked\* in their meagre features and attenuated

---

\* Their numerous little insurrections in the provinces, and the horrible outrages which their despair urged them to commit, even against nature, is a sufficient proof of their sensibility to their wrongs.

“ Un pauvre homme passementier dans le fauxbourg St. Marceau, étoit taxé à dix écus pour un impôt sur les *maîtrises*. Il ne les avoit pas; on le presse et represse, il demande du tems, on le lui refuse—on prend son pauvre *lit*, et sa pauvre *écuelle*,—quand il se vit en cet état, la rage s’empare de son cœur; il coupe la gorge à trois de ses enfans, qui étoient dans sa chambre—sa femme sauve le quatrième, et s’enfuit; le pauvre homme est au Châtelet, il sera pendu dans un jour. Il dit que tout son déplaisir, c’est de n’avoir pas tué sa femme, et l’enfant qu’elle a sauvé.” The conclusion of this description is curious, and quite in character both with the *times* and the *writer*.—“ On devoit partir aujourd’hui pour Fontainebleau, où *les plaisirs devoient devenir des peines, par leur multiplicité*.”—*Lettres de Sevigné*, vol. iii.

This dreadful system of taxation, which maddened the lower classes into *murder*, only went to supply the expenses of a voluptuous prince, and to multiply the pleasures of his court, till they became “*pains*.”

forms : how keenly they felt, was evinced in the reaction of their feelings, when circumstances placed the sword of retribution in their hands, and vengeance exceeded her customary horrors, in the ferocious deeds of the *Carmagnoles* and the *Marseillois*.

---

It has always been observed by the travellers who visited France before the revolution, and particularly by the English, and by agricultural travellers, that the peasantry of that country were a singularly laborious and pains-taking race, enduring much and suffering patiently.---Mr. Young gives it as his opinion, that “they would have improved the country, if they had formed any part in a system, the principles of which tended towards national prosperity.” But no such system appeared, until the occurrence of that great *bouleversement*, out of whose principles of destruction and regeneration the present improved condition of the peasant population of France arose.

England, in the sixteenth century, set a great example to the rest of Europe, when she seized upon the overgrown possessions of the church, and converted the unhallowed

fruits of fraud and impiety to the benefit of the state. Men, devoted by their institutions and orders to poverty and humility, engrossed the riches of the country, and preserved a twofold influence, spiritual and temporal, subversive of the interests of society. But, the original abuse destroyed, the undue influence declined, superstition lost ground, and wealth circulated with a more equal and salutary distribution.\* What the despotism of Henry VIII. effected in England, the democratic principles of the revolution accomplished in France;† and

---

\* Of the mode of assigning lands to the church in France, many curious instances were discovered during the revolution, from the ancient archives of the cathedrals. In 1470, Louis XI. assigned over the whole Comté de Boulogne to the Virgin Mary, and promised to do her homage for it, in the person of the Abbé de Notre Dame de Boulogne : but, says a national writer, “ D’abord cet hommage religieux se rendit sur l’autel, et s’offrit directement au saint. Bientôt l’évêque, l’abbé, le titulaire du bénéfice se plaça entre l’autel et le pieux vassal, et reçut l’hommage, au nom du saint. Insensiblement on oublia le saint, et l’ecclésiastique s’attribua tout l’honneur, en qualité de bénéficié.”

† The inhabitants of Condom, in the department du Gers gave an eighth, instead of a tenth, in consequence of the clergy of the diocese having promised to liberate annually

the sale of the national domains was one of the strongest measures of this extraordinary event, producing incalculable benefit to the lower and agricultural classes, while the mode in which this measure was executed was eminently constituted to attach the peasantry to the revolutionary cause, and to induce them to give their aid and sanction to a political change, which, in emancipating them from slavery, added property to freedom, and converted five hundred thousand labouring serfs into independent proprietors. In the public sale of the national domains, the government became the agent of the peasantry : a certain portion of land, ordinarily contiguous to his dwelling, was given to each peasant who presented himself as a purchaser ; time was granted

---

from purgatory two hundred and fifty souls of their friends and relations, and to conduct them straight to Paradise.

Monsieur Falconet, in his work on the necessity of restoring all the church lands to the clergy, ascribes all the horrors of the revolution to the violation of their sacred property. He strongly recommends the measure of turning adrift all the present proprietors, and of restoring the domains of the rich monasteries, which were *bequeathed to heaven* by many a pious penitent, “ *comme fondation pour le remède de son ame.*” He mentions *Mirabeau* incidentally as *un Mirableau*. This pamphlet has many admirers among the royalist party.

him to pay the purchase-money, and a small sum was advanced, to enable the new proprietor to commence the cultivation of his little farm. "Give a man secure possession of a bleak rock," says a celebrated agriculturalist, "and he will convert it into a garden; give him a few years' lease of a garden, and he will turn it into a desert." The truth of this position was strongly illustrated in the peasant proprietors of France; and notwithstanding the evil influence which the spirit of foreign conquest in their late ruler must have had upon the resources and industry of the people, yet when the allies first approached the frontiers of the French territory, they invaded a country whose peasantry were the best conditioned, and most prosperous of any nation in Europe. In visiting the extensive farm of a person of rank and fortune, in the Isle of France, and remarking to him the apparent opulence of his tenantry, and the general prosperity of the country, he made the following observations, which spoke equally in favour of the moral and physical condition of the people: "It is impossible to foresee what may be the consequences of the enormous depredations committed by the



foreign troops, when added to the losses already sustained by the military systems of Napoleon. The contributions already levied are beyond the resources of the nation; but with respect to our peasantry, it is quite certain, that, besides the improvement of their general condition by the revolution, they have also made a provision of energy and good sense, which strengthens and enlightens them to meet every attack of adversity, and which they did not possess thirty years back."

It is, however, neither possible nor true, that, in this general prosperity, all are opulent in a class where so much must depend on individual exertion and peculiarity of circumstances, on the nature of the soil, or the character of a province. It would be rather a public evil than a general good, if an order did not exist which had only its daily industry and good-will to depend on: but even the least favoured among the labouring class feel some reflection from the prosperity that surrounds them. No longer "*un peuple serf, corvéable et taillable*,"\* all

---

\* The titles of feudality, as M. de Mably observes, are sufficient proofs of "l'asservissement dans lequel le des-

are alike free to offer their labour for adequate remuneration; and all now feel that this newly-possessioned power of self-disposal is property, in itself.

---

The peasantry of France may perhaps be divided into the distinct classes of proprietor, farmer-tenant (*fermier*), and labourer. A French writer has termed the labouring class of a free state "*la pépinière des soldats*." It was on this class that the law of military conscription fell with most frequency, though not with most weight; for the labouring peasant made but little sacrifice, when he flung away the spade for the musket, and left the track of his plough for the march of victory, From the ranks, however, so often supplied by this class of men, arose many of those brave commanders, who planted the eagle-

---

potisme des seigneurs tenoit le peuple, et qui les rendoit les maîtres absolus de sa fortune et de ses forces." Among these seignioral titles were the following: "Seigneur haut et puissant, seigneur redouté, et très redouté." The immense surface of France must naturally produce great variety in the characters and conditions of the people. In Brittany they are much less civilized, and in some districts of the west and north much less opulent, than in the other parts of the kingdom.

standard of France in almost every country in Europe ; for it was a maxim with the chief who reigned in military supremacy over all,

That he who doth i'th' wars  
More than his captain can, becomes  
His captain's captain. SHAKESPEARE.

Michael Ney, a young hussar, distinguished himself while yet in the ranks, by unparalleled intrepidity ; and, gallantly fighting his way through every subaltern degree of his profession, was presented by his colonel-general with a company, on the sole recommendation of his own merits. The simple hussar became in time a marshal of France : his sovereign raised him to the highest rank in the state, by the titles of Duke D'Elchingen and Prince of Moskowa ; and his country conferred on him that title, "greater than all," when, in her gratitude for his services, she named him "*le brave des braves*."

The disbanding of the veteran troops of France has obliged most of its subaltern members to return to the obscure labours of their youth ; and, foregoing

"The grappling vigour and rough frown of war,"  
with minds long trained to other objects,

and habits long tempered to other views, the heroes of Marengo and of Austerlitz again appear following the plough in their native villages, and are of necessity become “hewers of wood and drawers of water.”

I remember to have met one of these military labourers, these veteran “*braves*,” who had been driven with an army almost frantic behind the Loire, engaged in the inglorious labours of the spade, and working on the estate of a soldier, who had himself long since turned his sword “into a ploughshare,” after having wielded it only in the service of virtue and of freedom.

I was one morning, in the summer of 1816, walking under the venerable towers of Chateau la Grange, and leaning on the arm of its illustrious master, general the marquis de la Fayette (and who would not boast of being supported by that arm, which raised the standard of independence in America, and placed her banner above the dungeons of France?) The figure of a labourer, who was working on the moat which nearly surrounded the chateau, struck me as being both distinguished and singular. He was a tall athletic man, something advanced in life.

As we approached, he touched the little embroidered cap, which did not conceal his grey locks, and drawing up into an erect posture, gave the military salute, which M. de la Fayette most punctiliously returned. As the labourer resumed his spade, I asked the general, in English, whether this was not one of the disbanded soldiers of the Loire. "I should suppose," he replied, "a distinguished one; for I find he is a member of the legion of honour, and you may perceive the ensign of his order glittering through the rents in his jacket." The man raised his eyes to us, as we now stood beside him; and perceiving that the general was looking at his work, he asked with anxiety, "*Vous en êtes content, mon général, j'espère?*" "*Mais oui, mon ami, parfaitement, cela va bien,*" replied the general. "*Bon bon,*" returned the soldier, and resumed his labours with all the vigour of an able pioneer. "That brave fellow," said M. la Fayette, as we pursued our walk, "has passed twenty years in the service of his country. He is covered with scars. He had already obtained the subaltern distinctions of his profession, and in another year was to have been appointed a commis-

sioned officer; *en attendant*, he received the cross of the legion of honour, and thought himself amply recompensed for all his services. It was thus by a few laurel crowns, that the Romans became masters of the world. This disbanded veteran returned a few weeks back, to his native village, which is at this moment visible through the trees of that dark wood: he offered his services to my *concierge*, who accepted them. He labours through the week in his tattered fustian jacket, and gratifies all that is left of his military pride, by exposing his badge of honour to the admiration of the rustic crowd, with which he mingles at mass on Sundays."

But the ranks of the labouring class are not alone filled by the disbanded privates of the army; for many (and there is a romantic sadness in the idea), whose brows have recently been shaded by the "*panache blanc*" of military distinctions, whose voice was law, and whose breath was command (now expelled to make way for "daintier captains"), are driven by necessity to earn their daily bread by daily labour.

One of my gallant countrymen, attached to the English army now in France, was

stationed with his company in a village at some distance from the head-quarters : he was returning with his dogs, after a sporting ramble in the neighbourhood, when he overtook a team, whose driver displayed a costume at once military and civil—his waggoner's frock contrasting with a large cocked hat. As they pursued the same route, the English officer endeavoured to enter into conversation, but was answered with that *brusquerie*, which intimates impatience of obstruction. A few useless questions on the state of the game in that country had nearly finished an intercourse so churlishly supported, when the waggoner, casting his eyes on the undress uniform of the Englishman, asked, in his turn, some questions as to the state of the English army, in terms sufficiently technical to betray his experience on the subject to which he had so abruptly adverted. The conversation became interesting : it turned on the war in Spain. The Englishman alluded to the "hot work" of a particular day. "Were you in that engagement?" demanded the waggoner eagerly.

"I was wounded in it," said the Englishman.

“ And I,” said the Frenchman, “ was wounded in it also.”

“ I was attached to such a division.”

“ I commanded the battalion opposed to that division.”

“ I am addressing an officer of the French army then ?” said Captain \*\*\*, moving his hat.

“ I had once that honour,” answered the Frenchman, returning the bow ; then, after a moment given to dejected thoughtfulness, he rallied from his abstraction, wished his companion a good morning, and springing on the seat of his waggon, cried, “ *Vif, vif,*” to his horses, and drove rapidly on. When Captain \*\*\* reached the village inn, he perceived his military acquaintance leading out his horse to water. He enquired of the *aubergiste*, who he was ; “ *Ah pour celui-là,*” replied the innkeeper, “ *c’est un de nos licenciés, c’est le capitaine de R---, un brave homme ! c’est grand dommage ! mais voilà comme sont les choses dans notre pauvre France. Cependant, diable ! que voulez-vous ?*”\*

---

\* Une quantité prodigieuse d’officiers sans moyens sont renvoyés du service, et mis à la demi-solde ; tandis qu’on



The agricultural surface of France is divided into what is called, in the language of the country, "*le pays de grande, et de petite culture.*" In the former, the size of the farms has been little affected by the revolution: the only difference that has occurred is, that several farms belonging to one landlord may have been purchased by the farmers who formerly cultivated them, or by a small proprietor, whose exertions are confined to the ground he has bought. The possession of small plots of ground by the day-labourers has become very frequent; and it is sometimes usual in these countries to let them to the great farmers who are desirous of having them, to complete the quantity of land which the size of their establishment demands.

The *pays de petite culture* is composed of small farms, for the cultivation of which the landlord finds the tenant in horses and ploughs, and divides with him the profits.

---

forme des corps entiers de jeunes gens, à peine échappés du collège. Ces jeunes gens, commandés par des vieillards hors d'état de supporter les fatigues militaires, sont institués pour remplacer cette terrible garde impériale, qui toujours dans la bataille décida la victoire.

*Examen rapide du gouvernement des Bourbons.*

Upon the large farms the condition of the tenant is very much like that of our own English farmers ; and in the *pays de petite culture* there exists a race, long disappeared from England, of poor but independent yeomen, who rear their families in a degree of comfort as perfect, as it is remote from luxury. The dwelling of a French farmer presents the same scene of rural bustle, activity, and industry, as is usually found in the English farm-house. The women always appear full of occupation and energy, and share, in common with their husbands, fathers, and brothers, the toil and anxiety of their condition.\*

While we were on a visit in the canton of La Beauce, at the chateau D'Orsonville, the seat of the marquis and marquise de Colbert Chabanais (and it is a delightful link in the chain of association, which leads me back to days so happily passed), we accompanied *la belle châtelaine*, the lady of the castle, on

---

\* “ C'est un avantage multiplié partout, depuis la révolution,” said a French farmer to us, speaking of the improved state of the labourers ; “ que les domestiques des fermes et les journaliers possèdent une maison et quelques morceaux de terre, en addition aux gages.”

a visit to a rural bride, the wife of one of their farmer-tenants. We found her already deeply engaged in all the bustle of housewifery, standing in the midst of a pile of brown loaves, which she was preparing for the labourers.

“ *Vous voilà déjà occupée du ménage, ma bonne Madelaine,*” said marquise de Colbert, as we entered.

“ *Eh ! mais, mon Dieu, oui, Madame, pourquoi pas ?*” replied Madelaine, shaking the flour from what Madame de C---- called “ *son luxe de jupe,*”—the superfluous quantity of her well-plaited cloth petticoat well meriting the epithet. Madelaine then, with evident pride in her newly acquired opulence, did the honours of her house, by requesting us to walk into the *grande chambre*, or best parlour, and to leave “ *la maison,*”\* as she called the kitchen, or place of general reception ; where an immense marmite, bubbling over the wood fire, sent forth the fume of the savoury ragout preparing for the family supper.

---

\* It is customary, in many parts of England, to call this part of a farmer's cottage, “ the house.”

*La grande chambre* exhibited one of those excessively high and excellent beds, which it is the ambition of every French peasant to possess ; and its old brocaded hangings seemed to boast a nobler origin, than the fresh and snowy counterpane which accompanied them. An *armoire*, antecedent (by its structure) to the days of Boule, held the bridal wardrobe, or rustic *trousseau*.\* *Madelaine* drew our attention also to the high chimney-piece, where ticked a handsome pendule, in order to point out to us her taste and her piety, exhibited in a piece of ornamental wax-work, representing two young lovers burning in red worsted flames, fond and devoted as the death-enamoured martyrs of M. Chateaubriand: “ *Ah, qu'elle est gentille ! n'est-ce pas, Mesdames ? --- c'est vraiment une coëffure charmante !*” There was in this dwelling of the farmer† every appearance of competency and comfort ; and though

---

\* “ *Trousseau*,” a portion of house-linen and clothes, which brides of all ranks in France bring as a dowry.

† I instance this *farm-house* in *La Beauce*, as a fair sample of the many farm-houses we visited in France. In Normandy I saw many superior. In Piccardy and Artois they were in general inferior.

it wanted those finishing touches of neatness to be found in an English farm-house, there was no absence of accommodation. Good beds, stout furniture, well-sashed windows, and spacious hearths, secured to its inhabitants all the prime necessities of an habitual dwelling, which was never to be exchanged for the chilling misery of a parish poor-house; except, indeed, a new order of things should provide such an asylum against that indigence, which the increased taxation, and contributions levied on the savings of industry, for the maintenance of foreign troops, may draw down upon the prosperous peasantry of the land at some future day.

In the course of a morning's walk in the neighbourhood of the chateau D'Orsonville, a sudden shower of rain obliged us to take shelter in the cottage of a *fermier*. We found two young women busied in folding up linen of an excellent quality and colour; and when we had reckoned twelve pair of sheets, we could not help observing they were rich in house-linen. "*Mais ce n'est rien, cela,*" replied one of the girls, and took some pains to convince us that what we saw

would go but a very short way in providing beds for the labourers in harvest time. Mentioning this circumstance to Monsieur de C—— at dinner that day, he assured me that it was not unusual for a *fermier* to have one hundred and fifty pair of sheets for the use of his family;\* for that, in general, the French farmers were sufficiently opulent to indulge in a luxury, indispensable in France among all classes, good linen and good beds. Among his own tenantry, he added, there were some who were supposed to be worth two or three thousand pounds, English money; and that a few days before, one of his *fermiers* had given a portion of a thousand Napoleons with his daughter in marriage.

Such is the condition of these small proprietors of lands, of which their fathers were considered the *live stock*, when “*nulle terre sans seigneur*,” was the maxim of the times.

---

*Additional Note.]* \* This fact has been denied by many English critics, who do not perhaps know that the French in general pride themselves on this abundance of house-linen: one hundred and fifty pair of coarse farmer's sheets would not be a very expensive purchase. At all events, the assertion is given on the authority of a French nobleman; whose veracity is far above the suspicion of wilful deception.

There is something exquisitely gracious in the contemplation of that state of things, that true golden age of a country, “where every rood of ground maintains its man,” and “*les petites propriétés*” of France enjoyed by the most numerous class of the peasantry, whether purchased by the savings of the *fermier* or *vigneron*, or whether obtained in the early part of the Revolution from the sale of the national domains, present a state of rural independence, extremely favourable to the views, and highly gratifying to the feelings of philanthropy.

We were travelling to the *château* of one of our hospitable French friends, when an accident, which happened to our carriage, obliged us to stop for an hour in the little village, which stands at the entrance of the valley D’Orsai. We resolved to turn our misadventure to account, by visiting the chateau of the celebrated Madame Cottin, which, we understood, was but at a walking distance. She, indeed, was no more! But the dwelling which has once been consecrated by the residence of *Genius*, (be it palace or hovel) is a shrine to which the mind and imagination naturally turn with pilgrim de-

votion; and the valley of D'Orsai, amidst whose shades the character of Malek Adel was created, will long preserve an interest, independent of its own loveliness and romantic beauty.

Having ordered "*une petite collation*" (as the *aubergiste* called a fillet of veal roasting at the fire for the breakfast of accidental travellers), we walked down towards the valley. Our steps were soon arrested by the appearance of a very handsome chateau, which hung over a pretty river, and which, as a large placard informed us, was "*en vente*." We asked a young peasant (who was eating his *gouté* of raw artichokes and bread and butter at the gates) who had been its late owner. He answered "Le Marechal Arrighi, the cousin of the Emperor, now an *exilé*," and the chateau and grounds were to be sold immediately. He could give us no further information, and we proceeded on our ramble. The sultriness of the weather had produced an insupportable thirst, which trees bowed down with fruit on every side tempted us to allay: but as this is a depredation rarely committed in France, and as property of this description



is held sacred, in proportion as it lies exposed, we thought it wisest to offer ourselves as purchasers of the "golden produce" of a *verger*, which nearly surrounded a very neat cottage by the path-way side we had accidentally pursued.

To the threshold of a French cottage there is no barrier : it is entered not, indeed, without ceremony, for there are certain forms of courtesy never dispensed with in France by any rank ; but it is entered by the stranger as by the neighbour, without hesitation, in the certainty of a civil, if not of a cordial reception.

We found the interior of the cottage infinitely superior to its external appearance : a clean and lofty bed occupied a little alcove in the outside room ; some articles of old china ornamented one shelf, and a few books another ; while the "*pot au feu*" was bubbling over a clear fire under the special superintendence of an aged dame, who received us very good humoredly. To our question, whether we could get any fruit to purchase, she replied "*mais très volontiers-tenez* ; and she hobbled to a little door which opened into a very small farm yard, where a cow, a mule,

and a pig, were lying amicably together under a sort of shed, on which some flax lay drying in the sun—" *tenez, Monsieur, et Madame !*" " You will have the goodness to cross that little *basse cour*, you will then find yourselves in the *verger*, where my son-in-law and my daughter will have the honour to receive your commands: they are both at work there." We found the daughter (a middle-aged woman) at her distaff, under a tree laden with green-gages, of which she gave us the plunder for the sum of *six sous* (threepence), exhorting us to fill our handkerchiefs, with repeated " *prenez-en donc, ne vous gênez pas !*"

We observed that the little domain of which she was mistress was composed of a *potager*, a vineyard, and a quantity of fruit trees and flowers. It was a delicious spot, and placed in a most delicious situation. We asked her, by what tenure her husband held it. She replied with vivacity, " *mais c'est à nous ; c'est une petite propriété ; tenez, voici notre mari--il vous racontera tout ça.*"

" *Notre mari*" was a tall robust well-looking man. He approached us with a low

bow. To our questions, repeated by his wife, he replied with the intelligence and frankness peculiar to the lower classes of France.

This little estate of a few "*arpens de terre*" had been obtained by his father, on the sale of the national domains.\* He had himself served in all the wars of the republic, and of the empire; but on the death of his father he had left the army, and took possession of his little patrimony, for he had no brothers or sisters to divide it with, according to the new law of succession.† He said their chief means of subsistence arose from the cultivation of their vines, which enabled them to

---

\* Before the revolution, the peasant, who was not oppressed by feudal tenures, and who could save by his earnings from the rapacity of taxation a little sum, raised himself to the dignity of a small proprietor. The pride which this singular and rare independence awakened was so great, that the dying father sometimes divided the proprietorship of a single apple-tree among his sons.—On this subject, see *Young's Travels into France*.

† There is no right of primogeniture in France: all property is now equally divided among the children.\*

\* The Quarterly Review, in its criticism on this note, observes that this practice has obtained in all countries, "except in the case of twins." Will not this serve towards identifying the country of the reviewer?

have “*un morceau de cochonnaille, dans le pot, et un peu de vin dans le petit caveau ;*” but he added, it required great industry to render their vines productive, during a six months’ constant cultivation ; and that he had little hopes of deriving much profit from this year, on account of the unparalleled humidity of the season. “ But what was a bad season,” he added, “ to the depredation committed by foreign troops ?---*Sacré,*” and he ground his teeth, “ *les coquins de Prussiens ;*” they drank up all the wine wherever they found it. We asked him whether, in some respects, the conduct of the Prussians was not a war of reprisals.

“ *Comment donc ?*” he replied, almost jumping with a sudden fit of passion, which his wife endeavoured to reprove with “ *mais quelle vivacité, mon ami !*”

“ *Comment donc ! une guerre de représailles ?*” The Prussians were the first aggressors :--- “ *pourquoi se mêler de nos affaires, dans le tems de la révolution ? sacré !*” “ But that is an *affaire finie !* they came as the allies of our king, as our friends ; and they plundered, they ravaged, they destroyed. *Allez, monsieur, allez dans le Perche, go to le Perche, to*

Sevres,\* to St. Cloud, hear what husbands and fathers have to say there! *Ah, seigneur Dieu! cela fait dresser les cheveux sur la tête! cela fait frémir!*"

I observed, that, as a soldier, he must be aware that such horrors were the natural consequences of war, under whatever colours it was carried on. "*Si fait,*" he replied petulantly, "*pour la guerre ouverte, cela s'entend; mais nos amis, les alliés, madame, voilà notre refrain!*" On this subject it seems, indeed, to be the *refrain* of the nation.

In those dreadful moments of desolation and carnage, when foreign armies, under the white standard of peace and of the Bourbons, ravaged the fertile plains and vine-covered hills of France;---when the nation saw itself the victim of that force, which approached its frontiers under the guise of amity---was there no royal arm to rush between the sword of the foreigner and the life of the subject? Was there no royal voice to raise its cry of protection, and, like the founder

---

\* A gentleman, whose estates lie in la Perche, assured me that the peasantry were with difficulty prevented from rising *en masse* against the Prussians.

of the Bourbon dynasty, shout along the charging line, "*Sauvez mes François?*"

There is scarcely any transition more instantaneous than the extremes of choler and good-humour in an irritated Frenchman. The subject of our conversation had thrown all the angry elements of our military proprietor into activity. A few complimentary phrases on the beauty of his little domain, and the probable happiness of his simple and industrious life, brought back all the gaiety, mildness, and urbanity of the French character. He bowed and smiled, and said he had no reason to complain of his lot; that if things would go on as they had done, all would be well. He said he knew us at once to be "*des Anglais, par notre tournure;*" and added, the English troops had shown great discipline, and behaved with much more moderation, than any other of the foreign armies.

Although he talked with singular intelligence on the actual agricultural state of the canton he inhabited, he was less alive to its literary interests; for of the celebrated Madame de Cottin he had never heard, nor knew any lady "*qui travailla beaucoup,*"

(wrote much) who had ever possessed a chateau in the *Vallée D'Orsay*. We mentioned the circumstance of her unfortunate kinsman and lover having shot himself in the grounds of her chateau, as an event likely to have attracted rustic attention: "*Eh! mais mon Dieu, oui!*" replied his wife, "*je me rappelle cela,*" and she pointed out to us a chateau in the distance, where a gentleman shot himself in consequence of suspecting the attachment of his wife for his own particular friend. For this information she was, I thought, reproved by her husband with a delicacy rather beyond the ordinary tone of rustic feeling: *Ma femme, c'est inconcevable, tu vas faire courir une histoire comme cela! une affaire de famille! si donc, qu'est-ce que ça te regarde?*"

The wife stood abashed; and the chateau of the suicide husband not being the chateau we sought, we were obliged to return to our inn in the village, much pleased with having thus accidentally lighted on one of those little proprietors, whose means of subsistence and happy independence lie within the compass of a few roods cultivated by their own hands, and whose condition has arisen out of the fermentation of revolutionary conflict.---

“ Misery,” said a French gentleman to me, speaking of the severity of the season, and the depredation of the troops, “ misery already attacks us, and presents a prospect of its increase, by the four years’ contributions we have yet to pay you ;” *mais encore elle n’atteint presque pas l’habitant des campagnes, qui est généralement devenu propriétaire.*

---

When the late Emperor of France returned to his palace of the Bourbon Elysée, immediately after his defeat at Waterloo, he continued many hours without taking any refreshment. One of the grooms of the chamber ventured to serve up some *gelée de bouillon*, and some coffee, in his cabinet, by the hands of a child, a sort of page, whom Napoleon had occasionally distinguished by his notice. The Emperor sat motionless, with his hands spread upon his eyes. The child stood patiently before him, gazing with infantine curiosity on an image, which presented so strong a contrast to his own figure of simplicity and peace. At last the little attendant, presenting his tray, exclaimed, in the familiarity of an age which knows so



little distinctions, "*Mangez-en, Sire, cela vous fera du bien?*" The Emperor looked at him, and asked, "*N'es-tu pas de Gonesse?*" (a village near Paris). "*Non, Sire, je suis de Pierrefite.*" "*Où tes parens ont une chaumière, et quelques arpens de terre?*" "*Oui, Sire.*" "*Voilà le bonheur!*" replied the man who was still, even then, Emperor of the French, and King of Italy.\*

---

Turgot, whose profound genius extended to every branch of human knowledge, who, at the head of a ministry, promulgated the principles of a philosopher, and said, "Let mankind be free, and let each country enjoy the peculiar advantages bestowed on her by nature,"---Turgot encouraged agriculture, as the best means of ensuring the prosperity of France; and brought to the aid and development of his great views all that France then boasted of genius and acquirement. But while it was the glory of the unfortunate Louis XVI. to have raised such a man to

---

\* This little anecdote is copied from a journal, supposed to be written by one of Napoleon's secretaries, called "*Nuits de l'Abdication.*"

the ministry, it was his weakness and his misfortune to have sacrificed him to the intrigues of that self-interested and privileged class, which hurried on alike the ruin of the sovereign and of the state; and the enlarged views of this great man for the agricultural prosperity of the land remained unaccomplished. But though France is still considered as far behind England in a science, on which her prosperity peculiarly depends, yet (in the words of a professed farmer and great landed proprietor) “*Le peuple s’est éclairé sur les principes de l’agriculture; le gout de la campagne s’est ranimé; et l’activité de l’esprit s’est portée vers les améliorations agricoles.*”

There is in the moving scenery of pastoral life something peculiarly cheering and picturesque; and though every country must devote itself to those pursuits, which are most adapted to its natural advantages, yet the pastoral country will ever present to the heart of the philanthropist images infinitely more consonant to its feelings, than can be supplied by the details of commerce and manufacture. From the meagre and squalid population which swarm amidst the noxious

vapours of the mine, or decay in the confinement of unwholesome manufactories, existing between the extremes of want and intemperance, and alike morally and physically debased, the feelings turn with disgust and commiseration ; while it is impossible not to envy a country whose population is invited, by a bounteous and prodigal soil, to devote its energies to the service of nature, even though that country be less great, less opulent, than our own. It is impossible to travel any distance in France, without being struck with the picturesque scenes which continually present themselves. In the south, and among the heights called “ *les petites Alpes*,” between Lyons and Geneva, a family of two or three generations may frequently be seen issuing forth from the cottage of the patriarchal sire, with the first rays of the morning ;--- the old dames, to cull the grasses and nutritive herbs for their cows ; the younger ones, to share the labours of the field or vineyard, with their brothers, husbands, or lovers, under the watchful eye of the guardian father ; while the boys and girls lead forth their sheep from the nightly fold, and the younger urchins take the reins of govern-

ment over large flocks of turkeys, and rule the politics of the poultry yard, with well-sustained authority.

In the course of our several little journies from our head quarters at Paris, we frequently stopped to talk to the shepherds who present themselves by the roadside, to salute travellers as they pass, and whom we found useful to our course through those miserable cross roads which usually lead to the *gentil-hommière*, or chateau, buried deep in some sequestered copse, and accessible only by paths, narrow and difficult as those to heaven.

The modern French shepherd, more characterized by the grotesque than the picturesque, has nothing in his appearance of the “*bergerie sentimentale*,” represented in the landscapes of Louis XIVth’s day---no crook wreathed with flowers, nor jacket *couleur de rose*; but his large straw hat, which shades out the sun; his stout frieze coat, which preserves him against the cold; his leathern belt, long staff, and scrip, seem all well suited to meet the necessities of his condition; while his little portable habitation, which he wheels about from scite to scite, as the wind blows or the sun shines, and his

faithful dog, with the merry, though not very musical tone of his sheep-bells, complete a picture not without its merits, even to the eye of an artist or a poet. Speaking in a jargon not always very easily understood, he never fails, when addressed, “*d’avoir l’honneur de vous saluer,*” or, “*de souhaiter,*” (with a low bow) “*bon voyage à madame et à monsieur.*” Frequently they followed us to repeat their instructions, relative to “*les méchants chemins*” we had to encounter; and they always exhibited in their manner the kindness of nature, mixed with the courtesy of civilization.

It is a singular circumstance, that the little proprietors of a few *arpens de terre* do not even yet cultivate pasturage for their cows; and this negligence, this remnant of their ancient bad system of farming, peoples the walks and fields on Sundays and holidays with groups of girls and women, employed in cutting grasses, with which they fill the little baskets hanging on their arms. It is thus a weekly provision is made for the cow, which is but occasionally released from its confinement, and permitted to range the field, under the guidance of a boy or girl leading it

by a rope. Every peasant has some little live stock : few are without a cow, and to it are usually added a pig, mule, or ass, according to the circumstances of the proprietor. There are, of course, many among these small farmers and owners of “ *petites propriétés*,” who have not enough land to find entire occupation for a plough and team ; and an arrangement is often made among a little knot of neighbours, to maintain among them the plough as common property, while each supplies a horse or mule for the general service. Thus the same *attelage* answers the purposes of all. It sometimes, however, happens that among these independent lords of an acre, some are so little favoured by fortune, as to be unable to join even these small and accommodating agricultural firms ; and then the proprietor is seen trailing a sort of ploughing machine, resembling a harrow, over his small territory, with the aid of one poor donkey, the scrub of the farm. Still, however, this man is an independent proprietor. The little spot of earth he labours on is his own : the portion of grain he sows he will reap : his children will eat of the fruit of the tree his hand has planted : and

while this modicum of land preserves him and his family in independence, while every particle of the soil is turned to its utmost account, and yields triple produce from what it formerly did, in less interested hands, the frugal savings of laborious industry do not go to feed the rapacity of the tythe-proctor, to meet the vexatious call of rack-rents, or to pay for air and light, the inheritance of the "very commoners of nature." The French peasant has not to encounter any one of the many evils that press upon the neck of the Irish peasantry, and the imposts which rendered unavailing the industry of his father, the *corvée*, the *gabelle*, the *taille*, now scare him no longer, even in his dreams. His time, his labour are his own; and the spot to which he devotes them is a land of promise, to which the light of liberty first directed him.

But beside the vineyard or the field, there is another branch of industry and profit in their rural economy, which engrosses much of their attention, and contributes infinitely to their amusement and gratification---a garden! Every French peasant has a garden. It is an arrangement both of necessity and of enjoyment, with which they never dispense.

There was a day in France, when flowers seemed only to breathe their odours for noble senses, or to expand their beauties to carpet the steps of royalty: the road was strewn with jonquils, over which Louis XIV. passed, on his celebrated visit to Chantilly;\* and Madame de Montespan hid the unseemly earth, which nourished her orange groves at her “*Armida palace*” of Clugny, with the rarest plants. The finest flowers in France are now to be found in the peasants’ gardens---the native *rose de Provins*, the stranger rose of India, entwine their blossoms and grow together amidst the rich foliage of the vine, which scales the gable, and creeps along the roof of the cottage. I have seen a French peasant as proud of his tulips, as any stockjobber-florist of Amsterdam; and heard him talk of his carnations, as if he had been the sole possessor of the “*semper augustus*.” When shall I behold, near the peasant’s hovel in my own country, other

---

\* Le roi y doit aller le 24 de ce mois; il y sera un jour entier—jamais il ne s’est fait tant de dépense au triomphe des empereurs, qu’il y en aura là. *Il y aura pour mille écus de jonquilles*. Jugez à proportion.—*Lettres de Scvigné*, vol. i.



flowers than the bearded thistle, (which there waves its "lonely head," and scatters its down upon every passing blast,) or the scentless shamrock, the unprofitable blossom of the soil, which creeps to be trodden upon, and is gathered only to be plunged in the inebriating draught, commemorating annually the fatal illusions of the people, and drowning in the same tide of madness their emblems and their wrongs.\*

Flowers are not only a luxury to the French peasant: they are a commodity of profit: they supply the markets of all the towns in France: and every British traveller is aware what a profusion of violets and lilies of the valley are obtained for a few sous at every village; and what pretty *bouquets* are tossed into the carriage windows, as it rolls rapidly on, at the risk of not being paid for, while the little priestesses of Flora offer their gratuitous prayer of "*bon voyage.*" Flowers, indeed, seem an universal passion of the nation; and the pretty village of *Fontenay-aux-*

---

\* It is an annual custom in Ireland to drown the shamrock in whisky, on St. Patrick's-day, a festival commemorated by every species of barbarous revelry.

## ANECDOTE OF CONDORCET.

*roses* derives its name from its abundant produce of "the queen of flowers," and from its ancient privilege of furnishing roses to the court and the parliament; for, under the old regime, in the month of May, "*en plein parlement*," each peer and magistrate received in his turn a *bouquet* of roses. But "Fontenay aux roses" possesses a celebrity beyond what its flowers bestow. It was here, in the pretty *maison de plaisance* of Mr. S---, that the illustrious and unfortunate Condorcet took shelter, a short time before his death. Fearing, however, to risk the safety of his friend, the unhappy victim of a sanguinary democracy again commenced his perilous wanderings; was observed, seized, swallowed poison, and died in a ditch,\* on the road which leads from Fontenay to Paris.

---

\* Having wandered for a considerable time in the woods, the exhaustion of hunger and fatigue urged him to seek refreshment in a little *cabaret*, by the road side. Forgetful of his disguise, and assumed character of a livery servant, while his omelette was in preparation, he took from his pocket an Horace, and began to read. This circumstance exciting suspicion, he was immediately arrested. Condorcet, as Voltaire has testified, was a man of the highest powers: and the purity of his views and the elevation of his character are still attested by all that is liberal in France.

Notwithstanding the quantity of vegetables raised in the *verger*, the consumption of this article is so considerable in every family, that the good dame who loads her mule, or ass, with panniers of cheese and butter for the market, generally brings them back filled with “*des légumes*” for the table. Another source of industry and profit to the peasantry is the bee-hive. Honey is much used in France; and this branch of rural economy is cultivated to a great extent, and (in the *Orleanois*) with a peculiar ingenuity, worth recording. When “the flowers hang down their heads to die,” and their honied essence has been completely rifled, the hive is carefully wrapped up in linen cloths; and the whole busy state is thus transported to the confines of the noble forest of Orleans; where the morning sun, and the luxuriant blossoms of the wild heath, open a new source of *ways and means* to some noisy, bustling, little Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, having run through the whole string of usual expediency, avails himself of the *supplies*, which others have accidentally presented, and prides himself on results, for which he had made no provision. On the banks of the Loire also,

this transplantation of old dynasties into the refreshing regions of new realms, is frequently effected with great success, by a similar process.

The condition of almost every peasant permitting him to carry on a little pastoral commerce with the great town of his commune, from some one branch, or other, of his rural economy, there are few scenes more cheering or animated than that, presented along the noble roads which lead to the great towns, on a market day. Such a scene I witnessed, on an early spring morning, in passing between the little village of Samer (where we had slept, and which we found garrisoned with British troops) to Montreuil, to which the sentimental topography of Sterne has given a distinction, far beyond what he himself ascribes to it, in the map of France.\*

A champaign country is always favourable to pastoral groupings: that before us was such as Gainsborough would have selected for one of his charming landscapes. The silvery hue of the atmosphere, which charac-

---

\* There is not a town in all France, which, in my opinion, looks better in the map than Montreuil, &c.---  
*Tristram Shandy*, vol. iii.

terizes the morning light of an early spring day, harmonized with the light handling of the trees, just bursting into foliage. Among the rural multitude which moved along the road towards the same point, there were many forms, marked by that elegant rusticity and historic character, attributed to the figures of Poussin, and which gave his landscapes so much interest; while the strength and grotesque rudeness of others presented the humorous originals of the Flemish school in all their breadth and coarseness. Boys and girls, with that graceful lightness and flexibility of figure and motion, peculiar to the French youth, skipped along the road side; others carefully led on the mule or ass, on which their grandmother, poised between her panniers, displayed all the finery of her "*habits de fête*." The old men, with long staffs and immense cocked hats, walked stoutly on, and led or drove the teams, carts, and wag-gons, which filled the road on every side. All was sound, and motion, and bustle, and business; the bells fastened to the showy worsted head-pieces of the mules and horses kept merry time to the whole animated scene; while baskets of violets and lily of

the valley, on their way to the market of Montreuil, perfumed the air with all the odour of a full-blown summer.

I know not what motive, for it certainly could not be compassion, had induced the sturdy driver of one of the many open *charettes*, which for a time kept pace with our carriage, to admit into his rustic vehicle, along with his dame and demoiselles, two or three British soldiers ; but the combination and contrast of this group were admirable. The military uniform, the military air, the English physiognomy, with a certain mechanical immobility of the well-drilled countenances (which had so long obeyed the command of " Eyes right," and " Eyes left," that every feature had been disciplined by beat of drum), presented the strongest contrast to the figures and faces of their companions, whose ever-shifting expression almost distorted intelligence to grimace, and whose violence of gesture received relief from the automaton-movements of their military companions. A cold, solemn-looking English sergeant was giving a sort of lethargized attention (while he smoked a long German pipe) to the details which the elder dame was

communicating, unconscious, perhaps, that he did not understand a word she uttered : while a spruce Irish corporal, who assured us, when we spoke to him at the barrier of Montreuil, that he felt “ *quite agreeable in France,*” was endeavouring to make himself so to a round-faced, black-eyed little demoiselle, who sat beside him, and who was running over the little coquetteries, in a language, which nature has rendered a mother-tongue all the world over : a tongue which Pat, whatever may have been his deficiency in the language of the country, seemed perfectly to understand.

In this singular and intimate association of the natives of two countries, so long opposed by

“ Contumelious, beastly, mad-brain’d war,”

there was something extremely gracious to the feelings ; and the horrible and sanguinary details which filled up the interval from the moment the British troops first entered France, were all forgotten in the contemplation of this little scene of reciprocal good-will. The English soldier no longer tracked his progress with blood, nor carried desolation to the hearth of the French peasant : the

French peasant no longer fled in fear, nor execrated in indignation the “ armipotent soldier ” of a rival country. Oh, why should nations, so closely associated by natural position, be ever opposed in sanguinary conflict ; and, assisting the wild ambition of their rulers, discover too late that they are but the dupes of their own national prejudice ; the victims of a policy, which works on them for its own views !

I fear, however, that this little scene was rather a rare, than a just sample of the intercourse and confidence, which subsist between the peasant class of France and their allied conquerors. Whatever public spirit is to be found in France, must not be sought in her capital, but in her provinces ; and a peasantry, whose substance is hourly drained by contributions and taxation, cannot be expected to look with much confidence and good-will on those, who have been the cause of these multiplied evils.

A few miles from Montreuil our postillion stopped his horses, and turning back his head, asked, with a grin of intreaty, “ *Monsieur, permettra-t-il à Madame de monter derrière la voiture ?* ” and he pointed to a smart girl, who



had run panting beside our *calèche* for some paces. Madame thanked us with a low curtsey for our permission, and thanked us again when she alighted at the barrier of Montreuil. We entered into conversation, while the *commissaire* was looking at our passport. She was an inhabitant of Samer. I asked her whether the English troops did not make her little town very gay? “*Bien le contraire,*” she answered, with a significant shake of her head; “*c’est d’une tristesse à faire mourir;*” for there were no “*bals bourgeois.*” I enquired the reason. “*Oh, par exemple, les honnêtes filles n’aiment pas se présenter devant les militaires étrangers.*” For this piece of village prudery, however, she would assign no reason, but “*eh! mais, que voulez-vous?*” and those broken interjections and accompanying shrugs of the shoulders, which in France mean every thing, or nothing, just as they are taken.

---

When Arthur Young travelled through France, in 1789, he observed that not only cottages, but well-built houses, were without glass windows, and had no other light than

what the door admitted. This true model of an Irish cabin would now, I believe, scarcely be found in any part of France, not even in the north, where the peasantry are in a less prosperous condition. There is, in the whole appearance of an excellent English cottage, an air of indescribable comfort, a sort of picturesque neatness, that goes beyond the line of mere cleanliness and accommodation, and speaks as much to the eye of taste, as to the feelings of philanthropy. To this character the French habitations, as far as my observation extends, do not attain; although I heard much of the flat-roofed cottages of Quercy, and of the exterior neatness, and interior comfort of the peasant residence in the south. The nearest approach to English comfort, which we saw, was in Normandy, where the compact buildings, composed of brick, interspersed with transverse beams painted black, and deeply buried in their "*bouquets d'arbres*,"\* or knots

---

*Additional Note.* \* Nihil vitii in hoc video. *Quarticus* verò, infelici conjecturâ, legit "*Bosquet*."

ARISTARCHUS.

*Bouquet d'arbres* IS a French idiom, of which the reviewer has betrayed "*gross ignorance*."

of fruit and forest trees, strongly resemble the farming tenements of Staffordshire and Shropshire.

The modern French cottages, however, are strong, and well-built; and are covered with a thatch peculiarly excellent, and perfectly adapted to render their lofts warm, and to repel the inclemency of their severe winters. Their chimneys are well constructed, their windows neatly sashed, and their doors well hung: the latter, I observed, were generally kept shut. The floor is almost universally of clay, beaten down to the consistency of stone. In the "*grande chambre*," or interior room, on which the prosperous owner displays his refinement and taste, there is occasionally to be found a *plancher*, or boarded floor. The ordinary cottage is, for the most part, divided into two apartments: the common room, which serves as kitchen, and a better apartment, in which the best bed and best furniture are placed. The lofts afford good sleeping rooms for the servants and younger part of the family. Every cottage has its little *basse-cour*, its piggery, and cow-shed; and too many exhibit their high estimation of a good *fumier*, by accu-

mulating the manure, which is to enrich their little demesne, nearly opposite to their doors.

One of the first objects with a French peasant, when he becomes master of a cottage, is to furnish it with an excellent bed. This luxury is carried to such an excess, that in many provinces, and in the west particularly, they ascend their beds by steps. Not to have a lofty bed is a sign of poverty, both in taste and in circumstances, which all are anxious to avoid; and to meet the “*qu'en dira-t-on?*” of the *commune*, on this subject, the sumptuousness of this piece of furniture is procured at the expense of other comforts, or sometimes even of necessities. In this article, at least, the peasantry are wonderfully improved, since the “*beau siècle* of Louis XIV.” that golden age, which all “*royalistes, purs*” wish to see restored. In the best æra of that prosperous reign, when Madame de Sevigné arrived at an inn, kept by a peasant, near the town of Nantes, she found only straw to lie on; and she describes it as a place “*plus pauvre, plus misérable qu'on ne peut le représenter; nous n'y avons*

*trouvé que de la paille fraîche, sur quoi nous avons tous couché, sans nous déshabiller ;*" and this was in the most splendid reign that France ever witnessed ; and this was in the very provinces, in which the peasant is now such a coxcomb, that he ascends his bed by steps.

I have frequently reckoned three or four beds under the same roof, generally placed in little recesses in the wall, and hung with faded tapestry, or curtains of tarnished damask, the second-hand finery of some *fripier* of the nearest great town, whose stores are even still but too well supplied from the spoils of revolutionary depredation.

Whatever spiritual grace may exist in the family of a French peasant, will be found exhibited in "*the outward and visible signs,*" which decorate the bed's head. *There* hangs the *bénitier*, with its holy water, a sort of domestic altar. *There* too is frequently suspended some thrice-blessed relic, which, though it may have lost much of its miraculous efficacy, preserves its station ; there also a maimed virgin, or headless saint, which infidelity has neglected, or time dismembered, still remains at least for ornament, if

not for use. I have frequently observed, that the bed of *Javotte*, under her straw roof, and the bed of the *petite maîtresse* of Paris, were precisely on the same model, each exhibiting her stock of vanity and superstition, in an article the least calculated for the display of either.

The *pendule*, or time-piece, which nearly excited an insurrection in *la Bretagne*, when introduced into that harassed province, in the days of Louis XIV. (as being some portentous engine of the *gabelle*), is now not only an ornament, but an indispensable piece of furniture, and is to be found in every better sort of cottage. Those, so much in use among the peasantry of the south, are fabricated in the Jura, or the Vosge, and are purchased at a very moderate price. To count time by its artificial divisions, is the resource of inanity. The unoccupied ignorance of the very lowly, and the inevitable *ennui* of the very elevated, alike find their account in consultations with a time-piece. It is in the hour-glass of energy and of occupation that the sand is always found neglected at the bottom.

One of our most liberal and most recent

English travellers in France, Mr. Birkbeck, describes in his brief journal. a French peasant, eating with a silver fork ; and I observed that we never stopped even at the poorest *hôtellerie*, on the cross roads, or in the smallest village (which we frequently did, as much to talk to the host as to obtain refreshment), that we had not our fruit and *fromage de cochon* served with massy silver forks and spoons. Indeed, with those few exceptions, which must be every where found to arise out of the peculiar circumstances of individual misfortune, the French cottage always indicates the dwelling of a thriving and prosperous population.

---

I have often heard it remarked by English travellers, who had visited France before the revolution, that the peasantry were at that period, as dishonest as they were necessitous, and yielded to temptations of theft the more readily, as the severity of the punishment universally prevented prosecution. This branch of morals, which depends so much more upon the condition of those who violate or respect it, than upon any abstract princi-

ple, is necessarily improved in France, with the amended state of the lower classes. Morals are inevitably bettered by the competency which excludes temptation; and property, universally, if not equally diffused, begets a respect for property, seconded by that law of self-preservation, which imposes the necessity of "doing as we would be done by." In this respect I have heard it allowed, even by the most exaggerated royalists, that the lower classes in France are infinitely improved, both in the towns and country: and the rarity of executions in France, for crimes of dishonesty, forms a singular contrast to their melancholy frequency in England. I remember our having alighted from our carriage to spare its springs in a sort of "crack-skull-common" road, that wound through a wilderness of fruit-trees, which might have passed for the original Eden, and which presented such temptations to the lips of the traveller, as she, "who for an apple damned mankind," would have found irresistible. I asked a boy, who with a little comrade was lying reading under one of these prolific trees, whether I might take an apple: he replied coolly, "*cela ne me regarde pas*; ---they



are not mine.” “ But you sometimes help yourself, I dare say.” He raised his head, and looking at me with an expression of humorous sarcasm, replied “ *Vous voulez dire, VOLER: n'est-ce pas, Madame? Non, Madame, il vaut mieux en demander, que de se faire voleur, pour une pomme.*” I know not whether this little anecdote be any illustration of the rustic morals of the country ; but I saw nothing, during my residence in France, that could induce me to consider it as a rare or splendid instance of probity. A more remarkable case, in point with the present subject, occurred to an Irish friend. He was leaving Paris during the reign of terror, and dropped down the Seine in a small boat, which just contained himself and his baggage. Within a mile of the town he was hailed by a *bon citoyen*, who mistook him for a “ *député, qui s'étoit évadé avec de l'or de la république,*” and was forced to land. After it had been determined by the mob that it would not be right to kill him without examination, he was dragged away to the *maire de la commune*, where he was detained nearly an hour, before he could show his passports, and be admitted to proceed. Yet on his return to his boat, he

found his gold-headed cane, silver saucepan, baggage, every thing in short, *in statu quo*, without injury, and without violation. Even then the lower classes began to feel they had a character to support, and guilty of crime, they already disdained the vices of slaves.

Sobriety is a constitutional virtue with the French; and drunkenness a vice strictly confined to the very refuse of the very lowest orders, which always infest great and populous cities.\* I remember asking an old female peasant in Picardy, whether *les bonnes mères du village* were ever guilty of this failing? She replied with indignation:--“*Dame! elles seroient chassées de notre commune.*”

The thin light *vin du pays* is the table-drink of the poorest peasantry; and there are few so poor as not to have a little store of superior quality in the *petit caveau*, or cellar, to celebrate the many “*festins*,” which enjoyment steals from labour, under the sanctified terms of epochs and commemorations.

To estimate the virtue of temperance, in the lower classes of any nation, it is necessary, perhaps, to have lived in a country

---

\* The military, however, drink freely.

so conditioned, that drunkenness becomes almost a venial resource against inevitable misery—where the policy, by which the land is ruled, exhibits such a complete tissue of error, both in its legislation and administration, that much of its power is derived from the perpetuation of a vice, which keeps the people degraded, and at the same time pours money into the exchequer.

---

The modes of every-day life in France, even among the peasantry and lowest classes, are powerfully influenced by the happy and genial temperament of the people. Although the peasantry are not without a certain *brusquerie* of manner, arising out of their condition, it is tempered by a courtesy, which indicates intuitive urbanity, beyond the reach of art to teach, or the means of cunning to acquire. There is, however, among the peasantry of the present day, as among all the lower classes, a certain tone of independence,\* which almost seems to claim equality

---

\* When Napoleon, in one of his harangues to the people, addressed the peasantry by the term "*paysans*," it gave general umbrage, as if the same term had been given

with the superior person they address, and which is evidently tinged with the republican hue, so universally adopted during the revolution. A French peasant meeting his brother peasant, takes off his hat, with the air of a *petit-mâitre*; and I have seen two labourers argue the ceremonics of their bare-headed salutation, with as many stipulations, as would go to a treaty of peace.

“ *Mais monsieur, mon ami, contrez-vous, je vous en prie.*”---“ *Eh, mais vous, monsieur, parbleu! si vous l'ordonnez; lá.*”---And both, with a bow and a scrape, after a few more compliments, resume their hats and their conversation together. Equally polite to his superior, but not less independent in his manner, than when addressing his equal, “ *l'homme du peuple*” now looks “ *l'homme comme il faut*” full in the face, when he addresses him; but there is a mixture of intelligence and frankness in his manner, extremely pleasant to witness; and at once foreign from familiarity and meanness. In listening to their sensible questions, and frank replies, how often, and how unavoid-

---

to the yeomanry of England. He accordingly took care not to repeat it.

ably, have I contrasted their deportment, with that of the peasantry of my own country; where a whole population seem condemned to exhibit in their unregulated conduct and manners, the extremes of lawless resistance, and of groveling servility;—where he, who for some trifling benefit, to-day kneels in the dust at your feet, in exaggerated gratitude, with “*long may you reign! may you have a happy death!*” (for power and death are familiar images to the Irish mind) will, perhaps, to-morrow, in the midnight meetings of his wretched hovel, in the desperation of poverty and inebriety, plan the violation of your property, or the destruction of your life. Slave of his passions, and victim of his wrongs; in good or ill, equally governed by their tyranny, he re-acts upon the policy which made him what he is, with a faithful, but frightful influence.

---

The domestic manners of the French peasantry, like their domestic affections, are mild and warm; and the *possessive pronoun*, which denotes the strong binding interest of *property*, in the object to which it is attached, is profusely given to all the endearing ties of

kindred. “*Notre mari*,” or more frequently “*notre maître*,” is the term which the wife uses, when speaking of, or to, her husband; and the adjectives of “*bon*,” or “*petit*,”\* are generally attached to every member of the family, according to their rank, or age. The grandsire is always “*le bon papa*,” and all sisters and brothers are “*petite*” and “*petit*.”

During my most pleasant residence at the Chateau D’Orsonville, I one morning accompanied Mad. de C---- in a walk into the village, to visit an ancient *vigneron*, who had, in his youth, been a gardener in the family, and who was now a sort of little *propriétaire*, cultivating his own *petite terre*, and supporting a family of three generations, by its produce.

The cottage of this little landholder was inclosed within a low mud wall, immediately opposite to it; and within the same court was the smaller cottage of his son’s family. A flower knot, in which we found the old

---

\* These family endearments are the same among the first as among the lower classes, and the diminutive “*petite*” is given to the daughter or sister of a duke, as in the family of a peasant.

man working, although it was Sunday, was the ornament of both. "*Bon jour, père Marin,*" said Madame de C----, as we entered the wicket gate. "*Bon jour, mademoiselle,*" returned *père Marin*, throwing aside his spade, and approaching us with a low bow, not ungracefully performed for a man of years. "*Et, la bonne femme?*" asked Madame de C----.

"*La voilà, notre femme,*" replied *père Marin*, pointing to the cottage---"*Elle apprend à notre petit bon homme à prier le bon Dieu;*" and, in fact, we found *notre petit bon homme*, a fine boy of four years old, on his knees before his ancient grandmother. She arose at our entrance, and replacing her missal and beads on a shelf, which contained some gardeners' calendars, and an old volume of Bossuet, welcomed us with great courtesy. Madame de C---- enquired for all the members of her family (and she asked for each by their name): the old woman replied, "*pour notre fils, il est allé s'égayer au jeu de bague, au château---et notre bru, elle est auprès du berceau de notre petite, petite; et pour le petit bon homme, le voilà, le voilà, le magot!*"

Madame de Chabanais asked "*le magot,*"

whether he would accompany her back to the château.--“ *Mais très volontiers,*” he replied, and nodding to his grandfather and grandmother, he added, “ *adieu, notre bon papa; adieu, notre bonne maman;*” and “ *adieu, maman,*” to his young mother, who was seated at the door of her cottage, rocking the cradle of an infant child, and engaged in making a shirt for her husband.

The peasantry submit with difficulty to the *ennui* of idleness, imposed on them by the new regulations, which enforce the strict observance of the sabbath---an observance unknown in most Catholic countries.

Before I take leave of the family of *notre bon père Marin*, I must notice an incident, which struck me forcibly. The book-shelf of the grandfather was filled with books of devotion and agriculture. The books on the shelves, in the son's cottage, (which were pretty numerous) consisted of some odd volumes of Voltaire, Molière, Rousseau, and la Bruyère. I asked the young woman whether her husband read much? She said, always, when he had time. After we had walked in *père Marin's* garden, which was large and well stocked, he hobbled after me



with some fine carnations, apologizing that his grapes were not ripe. I have preserved these flowers; for I know no specimen in the hortus siccus of Linnæus more precious, than the flowers gathered from among the cabbages of a peasant's garden.

I observed in the cottage of *le père Marin*, as indeed I did wherever I had an opportunity of conversing with the French peasantry, a primitive simplicity of manner, united to natural quickness and evident tendency to a sort of quaint humour. In Auvergne, Bretagne, and Béarn, I am told this is particularly observable; and that among these truly pastoral people, the subject of many modern idylliums may be found, not less touching, nor less naïve, than the ancient. Nor, indeed, are the Theocriti and Sannazari of the *Théâtres du Vaudeville, et des Variétés*, unfaithful to their originals; though, perhaps, they do not always take the most poetical view of their subjects.

The *tutoiement* has no equivalent in the primitive *thee* and *thou* of the English translation. The *tutoiement* universal in France, in all the intercourse of friendship and intimacy, is always used among the peasants, except

to their superiors ; to whom, during the revolution, it was also applied in the then reigning grammar of French equality. “ *Te on se tutoye*” was frequently seen written over the doors of the public *bureaux*. Perhaps it was a remnant of the rustic education, received by the royal mountaineer, Henry IV, which made him not only *tutoyer his wife*, as he called his *queen*, but his ministers of state---

“ Je bois a *toi*, Sully,  
 Mais j’ai failli :  
 Je devois dire à *vous*, adorable duchesse !  
 Pour boire à vos appas,  
 Faut mettre chapeau bas.”

By this little *chanson à boire*, the *tu* and *toi* were even then evidently deemed vulgarisms, which offended the pride of the haughty Duchesse de Sully, whom the royal poet dignifies with the stately pronoun “ *vous*.” I have heard Napoleon’s *roturiere* origin quoted by the *royalistes purs*, as explaining the vulgar circumstance of *his* using the “ *tutoyer*” to the *daughter of the Cæsars*, who, however, was so little hurt by the coarse familiarity, as to call the Emperor of the French and King of Italy, in return, “ *mon petit raton !*”

All the ties of kindred are peculiarly sacred among the French peasantry ; and parental feelings are so strong, as to have given rise to a custom, which, however touching in a pastoral tale, would perhaps, in real life, be more “ honored in the breach than the observance.”

When the aged parent beholds the prospects of life closing dimly on his view, he endeavours to catch one parting ray from its sinking sun, by an act, which rallies all the best feelings of humanity to the heart. He gives up his all to his children, and throws himself on their generosity and gratitude for future comfort, maintenance, and support. He thus affords them the opportunity of repaying the cares he lavished on their helpless state, by consigning his feebleness to their protection : and as he is led from the cottage of one child to that of another, his arrival and departure awaken all that yet remains vital at the heart of the old sire, and renew emotions, which usually slumber or die in the independent selfishness, by which the egotism of age excludes itself from gratuitous kindness.

This imprudent, but benevolent, custom

of an affectionate and primitive people (for the French peasants are extremely *primitive*), is sometimes, though very rarely, a test of human virtue, too much for the proof; and evinces in the father's wrongs "how sharper than a serpent's tooth it is, to have a thankless child." The destitute and ill-requited parent may sometimes appeal to the friend's protection, or the stranger's sympathy, and cry, in the affecting words of Lear, "*I gave them all.*" It is delightful, however, to believe, as I was constantly assured, that such instances of turpitude are very rare; and that splendid examples of filial devotion and filial gratitude are of every-day occurrence. A peasant father, who had thus generously, but incautiously, distributed his little property, during his life-time, among his children, was met by a neighbour, as he was returning from his first visit to the house of his son---"*Eh; comment vous ont-ils reçu?*" asked his friend. "*Comme leur enfant!*" was the touching reply.

Oh! blessed be the roof which shelters the aged parent's head from the last rough shocks of time and adversity!--beneath whose shed love repays all that love bestowed!--where

the cradle of reposing age is gently rocked by filial hands ; and where the latest look of life falls on objects, which render even its last moments precious !

In this act of confidence and generosity, the servants of the family are never forgotten ; and they, in return, when they die childless, bequeath their savings to some of the children of the family, with whom they acquired it ; for the tie between the servant and master, in the peasant regime, is cemented by some of the kindest feelings, of which human nature is susceptible.

Among the Protestants of Saintonge, the favourite domestic is chosen to answer for *l'enfant de la famille*, at the baptismal font ; and this religious alliance inspires the most devoted attachment, on the part of the servant, to the young master. Still, however, the farmer, who marries the *domestique*, (as the female servant is called in the rustic *ménage*,) is lost for ever to all respectability in his *commune*. This aristocratic horror of a *mesalliance*, so strange in a primitive peasantry, doubtless has its origin in some old prejudice, which has escaped beyond the records of traditionary lore.

There is, among the lower classes of the French, a species of native humour, which, quaint and simple, furnishes little comic scenes of an almost dramatic effect, in their daily intercourse. I remember seeing an old *voiturier* indulging his humorous disposition, at the expense of the solemnity of the stately *commissaire* of the *barrière St. Denis*, with an accompanying grimace and posture quite indescribable. He was driving his little vehicle carelessly along, singing to a group of peasant girls, whom he was conveying to Paris,

“ Qui veut savoir l’histoire entière  
De Mam’selle Manon, la couturière.”

“ *Votre passe-port,*”---demanded the *commissaire*,--a tall, stately-looking military man, with only one leg. The old *voiturier* looked him full in the face; then recommencing “*qui veut savoir, &c. &c.*” was driving on, when the *commissaire*, furious at this want of respect to the dignity of his office, seized the reins of the sorry horse, with a volley of imprecations, terminating his anathemas with “ *votre passe-port, ou vous ne passerez pas.*” “*Comment, diable, je ne passerai pas?*” repeated the *voiturier*, starting from his seat in a passion; “*un passe-port pour mes quatre*

*pucelles !*" pointing to the girls, "*faut-il faire péage pour des denrées telles que celà ? Va-t-on octroyer les pucelles ? Diable emporte l'âme de mon chien, si j'en comprends un mot, moi !--- tenez, Monsieur !---que voulez-vous faire avec ces quatre pucelles ?*" The rage and impatience of the *commissaire* were now at their height, when the old *voiturier*, having indulged his humour, showed his passport, and coolly taking up his song of "*Mam'selle Manon, la couturière,*" drove on.

---

An elegant and modern biographer of Madame de Maintenon\* observes, that in the "*beau siècle*" of Louis XIV. "*les esprits étoient soumis à la religion, comme au monarque :* and Madame de Maintenon herself declares, that some of the gay young men of the most tiresome court in Europe were, "*pleins de grandes impiétés, et de sentimens d'ingratitude, envers le roi.*" While it was thus the fashion of that pious day, to confound the sovereign and the Deity, and to consider the king both as the "law and the

---

\* Mad<sup>m</sup>. Suard.

prophets," in the purlieus of his own court \*, the peasantry, removed from the immediate presence of this human divinity, had but very loose ideas of a religion which was taught by priests, who, Madame Maintenon declares, in one of her confidential letters, "knew no more than themselves," adding---  
*"ils ne songent qu'à parer leurs églises; ceux qui sont plus éclairés, songent à bien prêcher; et leurs brebis ignorent tout."* †

---

\* "Dieu m'a fait la grace, Madame, (says the feeble Racine to Mad. de Maintenon), en quelle compagnie que je me sois trouvé, de ne jamais rougir de l'évangile, ni du roi." And yet this divinity died, alike hated and despised, left almost alone for three days on his death-bed, abandoned by his wife and his confessor.---His death was celebrated by rejoicings, which reached from the capital to the place of sepulture; and the remains of Louis the Great were carried through *bye-ways* to their long home, to avoid the indignation of a people, from whom he had only extorted blood and tears, and who, long opposing itself to the adulation of a corrupt court, had already changed the epithet of "*le grand*" into that of "*mauvais roi*."

Racine, who associates the king and the gospel so intimately, in his familiar letters, in his work on *Port Royal*, talks of the great designs of God on *la mère Agnès*. Such was the intellectual *calibre* of the author of *Phédra*.

*Additional Note.* † Will the reader, when he has perused the whole of this paragraph, imagine, that it contains one



To this testimony of the state of religion, among the Catholic peasantry of France, given by the exterminator of the Protestants, it is curious to add an anecdote of the dark ignorance of the peasantry of La Bretagne, on subjects of religious importance, and carelessly related by one, who cites it as a trait of humour, rather to be laughed at, than to be deplored; and whose evidence upon all cotemporary subjects may be fairly admitted.

“*Pour La Mousse,*” (says Mad. de Sevigné, speaking of the abbé of that name),

---

of the most serious charges, upon which this work has been taxed with impiety? *Ex uno disce omnes!*

The Author has protested against assimilating with the divinity, the open adulterer, the revoker of the edict of Nantz, the ambitious tyrant, who plunged Europe in blood and desolation;—she has noted the *ignorance of all religion*, which proceeds from a debauched and overpaid priesthood; and *therefore* she is branded with impiety!!—This worse than hypocritical cant is, in truth, a barefaced attempt to associate religion, with all that is most detestable in tyranny and debasing in superstition. The anxiety, which it betrays, to uphold the cause of civil and religious misrule abroad, and to poison the mind of the subject at home, affords ample matter for reflection, to every supporter of the British constitution as established by the revolution of 1688.

“ *Il fait des catéchismes, les fêtes et dimanches. L'autre jour il interrogeoit les petits enfans, et après plusieurs questions, ils confondirent le tout ensemble; de sorte que, venant à leur demander, qui étoit LA VIERGE, ils répondirent tous, l'un après l'autre, que c'étoit le CREA-TEUR DU CIEL ET DE LA TERRE! Il ne fut point ébranlé par les petits enfans; mais voyant que des hommes et des femmes, et meme des vieillards, disoient la même chose, il fut persuadé, et se rendit à l'opinion commune!*”

If, therefore, in the latter days of Louis XIV. when religion under the king and Madame de Maintenon had become a *fashion* among all classes, cotemporary writers assert that the peasantry in the provinces, old and young, believed *God the Creator*, and the *Virgin Mary*, to be one and the same person, it may be presumed that the cause of faith was not much bettered, under the reigns of the infidel \* regent, and his profligate ward. It may also be inferred that the Cardinals du Bois, la Fare, de Tencin, and

---

\* The devout *Mad. de Parabère* endeavoured to court the regent's favour, by *affecting* infidelity. “ *Tu as beau faire,*” said the regent, smiling, “ *tu seras sauvée.*”

de Fleuri, those Mascarilles of church and state, who governed both by such tricks and subtleties, as were worthy only of the valets and buffos of the vicious Italian drama,\* did not, by their example and conduct, enlighten the doctrine or improve the lives of the subaltern clergy, over whom they ruled.

It is the fashion to declaim, however, against the *decline* of religion in France, in the present day, and, comparing it to its former state under the old regime, to lament it has so little influence over the peasantry, and lower orders. But what *was* the religion, whose “*decline*” is thus lamented? What was its influence on a people, buried in the grossest superstition and darkest ignorance? While it permitted its ministers to mingle in the intrigues, and foment the disunion of all the cabinets in Europe, and to countenance the vices of the most licentious of its courts: while it induced the King of France to compromise matters with his conscience, by sending away his mistresses in Lent, and by taking them back at Easter!!!† while it ena-

---

\* See the *Mémoires Secrets* of the reign of Louis XV.

† Between the exhortations of her confessor, and those of Mad. de Maintenon, Mad. de Montespan was in-

bled him to quiet his death-bed fears, by laying his enormities on the shoulders of his confessor;\* while it lent its sanction to any vice rich enough to purchase its indulgencies;† and forwarded any views that pro-

---

duced to quit the king in the *semaine sainte*. Bossuet also preached to the king the necessity of giving up his mistress; but the “*semaine sainte*” being over, Bossuet and Mad. de Maintenon, who had other views for the royal penitent, beheld with mortification the return of the mistress to Versailles, “*plus triomphante et plus éclatante de beauté, qu'on ne l'avoit jamais vue.*” It was, however, the queen who prevailed upon the fair penitent to return to Versailles, and it was the minister of state, Louvois, who, says Mad. de Maintenon, *à ménagé un tête-à-tête.*” What a combination, and what a picture!

\* The ferocious confessor of Louis XIV. the jesuit Le Tellier, the persecutor of all that was good and illustrious in that day, and who united in his views and intrigues the Pope and the King of France, stood beside the bed of the dying king, who said to him, “*Je vous rends responsable devant Dieu, mon père, de toutes les violences que vous m'avez ordonnées.*”—Quere. Did he accept the responsibility?—See *Mad. de Maintenon's Life*, &c. &c.

† It was the confessor of Mad. de Maintenon, who quieted her scruples about living with the king's mistresses, receiving the addresses of a married man, and assisting at the orgies, which went under the name of *media nocte*. “*Il falloit que Dieu, (says Mad. de Maintenon) eût donné de grandes lumières à l'Abbé Goblin, pour qu'il*

mised to repay the compliance of its ministers, was its influence to be commended, and its corruptions passed over.

When the events of the revolution took their re-action upon all the errors of the state, which they overturned, it was natural for the disciples of ignorance and superstition to deny principles, when they lost sight of forms; and it belonged to the immediate descendants of those, who declared *God and the Virgin to be one and the same person*, to pronounce in their impious folly, that there was *no God to-day*, and to *vote him into existence*, to-morrow. For impiety thus daring and extravagant, was the natural consequence of superstition thus dark and ludicrous.

But amidst all the absurdities, which du-

*prît sur lui de décider, avec toute l'autorité d'un apôtre, que je devois rester à la cour. J'exposai tout à ce saint homme, qui persista à m'ordonner d'y demeurer.*

The immorality of all this is nothing to the odious and canting hypocrisy of the shrewd and strong-minded woman, who never could have believed that *God inspired* her confessor with the force of an apostle, to order her to join the midnight revels of the king, which assembled all that was most profligate and parasitical in his court. It was this permission to assist at these suppers, that M. de Maintenon asked, when she said, "*j'exposai tout*," &c. &c.

ring the revolution attended the temporary abolition of catholicism, it is most certain that it then received a shock, which in France can never, and will never be repaired. Among the peasant class, this shock has been more or less resisted, according to the force on which it had to act. In the *west* it was remotely felt. In la *Vendée*, where the three thousand nuns and priests in their pontificals, had been seen in the rear of the royal army, raising the crucifix with the bayonet, and lighting the torch of civil contention, at the lamp of faith, catholicism still finds her altars unimpaired. In many parts of the *south* a simple, and primitive people, who have always substituted *habits* for *principles*, and presented a rich soil to fanaticism in the ardor of their temperament, still cling to the religion, and superstition of their fathers. After the abolition of the priesthood, when there were no ministers to officiate, the peasantry of these provinces were seen assembling in the dilapidated churches, and chaunting the office with as much faith and unction, as if they had been paid for their services, or looked to being rewarded with the produce of the *dîme*. It is however a singular fact,

universally known, that while they thus devoutly clung to the *cross*, they professed abhorrence to its *ministers*, and dreaded the return of the *curés*, or *vicaires* ; who long before the revolution had forfeited all claim to their respect, by the undisguised profligacy of their lives, and their increasing exactions, under the sanction of the *dîme*.

“ As long as I can remember,”---said a gentleman to me in Paris, who was a native of the south of France,---“ as long as I can remember, *enfant de prêtre* was a term of reprobation among us, given only to the most abject and degraded.” In the mid-land provinces, in the north, and north-east of the kingdom, the catholic religion still retains its forms. Its rites, now severely enforced, are duly performed, though, generally speaking, coldly and partially attended to, while the increase of the priesthood, both in number and influence, is universally looked on with fear and horror.

The public mind in France has made a bold and vigorous spring, in proportion to the tension, which had so long restrained its force : and even the peasantry are as averse to fanaticism, and as alive to the absurdities

of popular superstition, as the most enlightened class of yeomanry in England; while it is obvious to all who converse with them on such topics, that they are infinitely more tolerant. They demand no master-cast in faith and doctrine; they cry not for exclusive distinctions and unshared privileges. "*Liberty of conscience for all men,*" appears the first article in their creed; and safety from sectarian persecution, their prayer for others, and for themselves. This blessed privilege, the birthright of man, they enjoyed to the fullest extent, under the splendid despotism of that singular person, whom they raised to the government of their nation; and whom they never would have abandoned, had not their love of constitutional liberty been keener than their love of national glory. They submitted to change, only because they hoped for amelioration.

Buonaparte, who had made his unrestricted power the pioneer to any despotism, which might succeed his own, was well aware that catholicism was the fit religion for a despot; and that there was no instance of any country in Europe, where freedom and catholicism dwelt together. He therefore built up her



ruined temples; and raised her prostrate standard; but he made her impotent in her influence, and powerless in her agency. He held the chief of her church in “durance vile;” he sheathed her blood-stained sword in a scabbard of peace, nor suffered the embers of her martyr-fires to be again re-kindled. “Shorn of her beams,” this once powerful ruler of the human mind, could no longer incarcerate in dungeons, burn at the stake, nor torture on the wheel.\* Retaining her title of sovereignty, without one particle of its power, she “held a barren sceptre,” and imaged the future destiny of him, who, in his isle of rocks, reigned only over a few willing subjects, by the ties of ancient habits, ancient affections, and ancient prejudices.

In reviving the order of the priesthood, he rendered them dependant on the state, and thus deprived them of all temporal in-

---

*Additional Note.* \* These blessings were reserved for the happier era of reviving legitimacy. It is strange that those who arrogate to themselves exclusive claims of loyalty to the constitution, have, in fact, aimed the deadliest blow at the British system, by raising up prostrate popery and divine right.

fluence. He restored no oppressive tythes, for their maintenance ; he granted no enormous revenues, for their extravagance ; he gave them no special exemptions, nor exclusive privileges ; and his estimate of their utility and influence was curiously marked, in the well-known circumstance of his having assigned the same revenue to the *Archbishop of Paris*, as to his own *maître de chapelle*. Thus the fruits of that once powerful see, the object of ambition to the illustrious Noailles and haughty Harlays, exceeded in nothing the revenue of the composer of *Elfrida*, and the “*Zingari en Fiera*.”\*

The Catholic religion, therefore, as revived in France, was a state religion, lending its seal to civil forms, and adding the weight of its venerable character to the novelty of political institutes. Alike free from persecution, or disunion, it left each man to the dictates of his own conscience, or the conviction of his own mind. It tolerated all other sects, while to its own faithful adherents it presented all it had ever pos-

---

\* The incomparable Paesiello, *maître de chapelle* to the Emperor.

sessed of beneficent and good. It had still power to console, but it was no longer capable of persecution. It opened its consecrated temples for the *oraisons* of the devout; but it presented no pageant shows for the amusement of the idle, nor was it taught to recall, to the generation of the nineteenth century, whatever was ludicrous and profane, in the barbarous superstitions of the fourteenth.

The restoration of the many religious processions, which have taken place since the return of Louis XVIII. is a subject of universal disgust and derision to all classes in his dominions, with the exception of those whose interest it is to countenance them; and the sarcasms which I heard levelled against these ceremonies, even by the *menu peuple*, during two Sundays that I assisted at the *fête-dieu*, in Paris, were quite sufficient to convince me, that in France, as *Scanarelle* says, “ *on a changé tout cela.*”

The *fête-dieu* is one of the most solemn and splendid festivals in the Roman church, and its preparations and rehearsals occupied and thronged the streets of Paris, for

some days before the great performance took place. In every direction crowds of workmen, carpenters, upholsterers, and gardeners, were seen fitting up the *reposoirs*, or temporary chapels, before which the procession was to halt, where the host was to be elevated, and a short service performed. These *reposoirs* were generally placed before the *porte-cochère*, or gateway of some public building. There was one before the prison of l'Abbaye, and another before the *palais de justice*. But that which struck me most for its splendour and its extreme research, was before the portals of the minister of police, M. de Caze; and, I believe, raised under his own *immediate direction*. It was a sort of alcove, open to the street, and in its whole arrangement, something like one of those decorated recesses, in which *Columbine*, standing on one leg upon a pedestal, first presents herself to the charmed eyes of *Harlequin*, in our Christmas pantomimes. This hallowed structure was lined and hung with different coloured velvets and showy silks, trimmed with gold fringe, and artificial flowers, decorated with prints and roses, with relics and toys, with crowns of thorns,

and *fleurs de lis*. The high altar, raised above many richly carpeted steps, was the centre of all that was most precious in piety and taste, covered with baskets of exotics and silver candlesticks, with fruit in wax-work, and saints in *or moulu*, and exhibiting to the eyes of faith and loyalty, a Christ on a crucifix, and a plaster bust of Louis XVIII. both fresh and new, and done expressly for the occasion.

When I passed by this *reposoir*, at a late hour on the eve of the festival, the workmen were finishing it by candle and lamp light---“ *Quelle dépense,*” said my husband to a gentleman, who was talking to us, at the window of our carriage. “ *Et pour quelle bêtise !*” answered the driver of a cabriolet, who had stopped his little vehicle to gaze upon the *reposoir*. As we lived near the Abbaye St. Germain, in which parish one of the first Sunday processions took place, we were awakened with the dawn on the preceding morning, by the noise of hammering, and the tingling of bells ; and on walking out, we found the houses of every street, through which the procession was to pass, bedecked and orna-

mented according to the ability or taste of the owner ; for *bon gré, mal gré*, every one was obliged to contribute to the show of the day, though few had any recollection, *how the thing was got up* on former occasions.

During the preceding day, the street-passenger run the risk of suffocation by the dust of ages, which was shaken out of carpets, tapestry, and blankets, at every door ; all in preparation for “ *la dernière répétition.*” The poverty of some of these decorations, and the incongruity of others ; the brilliant colours of the new Gobelin tapestry, the faded hues of the old ; the simple white sheet, (*faute de mieux*) or thread-bare blanket, (*faute de tout*) gave a sort of rag-fair appearance to the noble fauxbourg St. Germain ; which not even the many pictures and busts of the King and the Virgin, profusely distributed among the “shreds and patches” of piety, could relieve or dignify. When the procession, with its *dramatis personæ*, appeared, all this scenery and machinery lost its attraction ; and the actors themselves took exclusive hold of our breathless attention.

Of the two processions which I witnessed, I was the most struck in the first, with a

little boy of four years old, dressed in regimentals, who I thought was meant to be a caricature of Buonaparte; but who, as a pious old lady assured me, represented St. John the Baptist. What interested me in the second was, that the rear was composed of the royal family, and M. Chateaubriand! The procession of the *fête-dieu* was preceded and announced by a very fine band of music, and passed through the centre of the streets, which on each side were filled with a multitude of people, curious to see a spectacle so long denied them. Then followed, in order, the servants of the house de Montmorenci, in their singular and rich liveries, and some of the domestics\* of the royal establishment. The confraternity of the rosary (above a hundred females), all attired in white, crowned with lilies, half veiled, and carrying wax tapers, succeeded to the lackies and valets de chambre, and

---

\* It is an old custom of state and piety in France, for the noblesse to send their servants to these processions, and thus to show off their liveries and devotion at the same time. "*Que ferons-nous de nos domestiques ce carême ?*" said a fair pietest, who was lamenting that there were no processions. "*Nous les ferons jeûner,*" was the reply of her equally pious friend.

were followed by the “*catéchistes*,” or young females admitted recently to confirmation, all in the same vestal hue, even to their shoes. Among these latter I beheld, to my astonishment, the noble daughters of the illustrious house *de Montmorenci*, accompanied by their pious *femmes de chambre*, all chaunting hymns, “*avec leurs voix pures et virginales*,” like the fair chorusers in “*Esther*,” at St. Cyr. The choir succeeded, consisting of a number of young priests, recently initiated, and dressed in white robes; some flinging their massive silver censers in the air, while clouds of frankincense and myrrh rose with loud hosannahs to the skies; and others scattering rose-leaves, from ornamented baskets, beneath their feet.

This solemn act was performed every ten minutes, the whole *corps dramatique* stopping short, turning round, and bowing profoundly to the *dais*, or canopy, which followed close behind, containing the holy mystery of the *host*, placed on a cushion of crimson and gold! The *dais* was composed of four short transverse poles, something like a *bier*, or a child's *go-cart*, surmounted with a splendid canopy, under which two prelates, in *grand pontificals*,



who carried the *host*, walked with a motion irregular and slow as the first tottering steps of infancy; an irregularity communicated by a want of uniformity in the movement of those, who carried the poles of the *dais*. On either side of the *sanctum sanctorum* walked some of the peers of France and *cordons bleus*, all bare-headed, and in full costume; accompanied by the *maires* of the *arrondissemens*. Immediately behind the tabernacle, with eyes up-turned and elevated head, appeared M. Chateaubriand, the “*philosopher of the desert*,” in blue and silver. The whole was closed with a troop of soldiers; and in the neighbourhood of *Notre Dame* the cortege of the *fête-dieu* was ennobled and enlarged by the presence of royalty itself! For there the Count d’Artois, the Duc and Duchesse d’Angouleme, and the Duc and Duchesse de Berri, joined the pious train, with uncovered heads, and wax tapers in their hands. Thrice they thus paced the holy rounds of *Notre Dame* with royal pilgrim steps, to the delight of the pious; and to the amusement of their less devout subjects, who thus saw the heads of the state lending their powerful sanction to forms and

customs, which reason and opinion had long consigned to oblivion; who thus beheld the days of the vow-making Louis XIII. and of the pious revoker of the edict of Nantz again restored, and the progress of illumination checked by the ordinances and example of the government.

As far as my observations went, while I mixed among the promiscuous crowd, the feelings excited by this parade of royal piety and fantastic devotion, were not universally those of edification or applause. "*On a beau faire,*" said a woman, as she kneeled down beside me, while the *host* passed by. "*Cela ne tiendra pas,*" hummed a man, who resumed his hat and wiped the dust off his knees, when the procession was gone. "*Ah! la vilaine femme!*" exclaimed a French lady of my acquaintance, whom I recognized in the crowd; and who (pointing out her former *femme de chambre*, demurely chaunting in the chorus of the *confraternity*,) whispered me, "*Ah! ma chère, cette femme ne m'a pas laissé un morceau de dentelle; c'est la plus grande voleuse, et la plus grande tracassière du monde: cependant elle contrefait la dévote, dans nos nouveautés religieuses. Ah! la vilaine*

*femme!*" and she repeated her exclamation, as the pious purloiner of lace passed close by her. "*Voyez donc notre grand imbécille de maire,*" said a pretty *bourgeoise*, pinching the arm of the youth she was leaning on, as the *maires des arrondissemens* passed by; while a man, whose appearance was not much above that of a water-carrier, observed aloud, as he stumbled over a kneeling old woman: "*Sacré! s'ils veulent prier Dieu, qu'ils prient dans leur église.*"

While the revival of processions obtains so little popularity among the lower classes in the capital, they are looked on with at least equal indifference by the peasantry; and the attempts made to collect a pious force round the ambulating shrine of a village saint, have been found as abortive, in some places, as the attempts made in favour of the installation of the "royal bust,"\* in others. In Bou-

---

\* Several noted *fêtes*, and of course several processions, took place at Paris while I resided there. The *fête de l'Ascension*, which was also the *fête de Louis Treize*, who made a vow to celebrate that day, was very fine. The vow of the royal and pious *Nimrod* of France, was fulfilled by his descendants. The royal family walked upon the occasion; the princes held up the cords of the canopy.

logne-sur-mer, orders were given for a procession, in honour of the Virgin, whose wrath, it was declared, had caused that abundance of rain, which threatened ruin to all the *vignerons* and farmers in France. Some of her festivals had not been duly celebrated, since the restoration of festivals in France; and a well-founded jealousy had discharged itself in torrents of rain, which I had the misfortune to witness, during the greater part of my residence in the land of her displeasure. The priests, however, of Boulogne, to their horror, could not find a single Virgin, in that maritime city, to carry in procession, and were at last obliged to send a deputation into a neighbouring village, and request the *loan of a Madonna*, until they could get one of their own. This was at last procured, a little indeed the worse for wear; but it was not a moment for fastidiousness. The holy brotherhood as-

---

It was a singular circumstance, that this day was also *la fête de Buonaparte*. The procession was attended by the *corps municipal* and state officers, bishops, priests, and royal almoners, and Monsieur Chateaubriand! who seems *to let himself out*, like the mutes of a funeral, for these loyal and pious exhibitions.

sembled, and the *Madonna* was paraded through the streets; but no devout laity followed in her train, and no rainbow of promise spoke the cessation of her wrath. The people would not walk; the rain would not stop; the Virgin was sent back, to *pout* in her native village; and the miracle expected to be wrought, was strictly according to Voltaire's heretical definition of *all* miracles --- "*une chose qui n'est jamais arrivée.*"

At the commencement of the revolution, a similar procession was made in the neighbourhood of Paris, by the *curé* of a village; and while he was moving solemnly under a canopy with the shrine of St. G  nevieve, the rain fell in such torrents, that "*saue qui peut*" was the reigning maxim of the moment; the officiating minister, left almost alone under his canopy, observed to those who carried it, "*mes amis, elle croit que c'est la pluie que nous demandons.*" Whether the Virgin of Boulogne made the same mistake, it is impossible to say; but certain it is, that the rain continued during the whole summer, a punishment to French sinners, and a disappointment to English travellers.

To overload religion with forms and cere-

monies, is always to injure its cause. Truth wants no ornament : religion is in itself an *abstraction* ; “ the evidence of things unseen.” It is ever to be regretted that the first religious ceremony, mentioned in holy writ, caused the first *murder*, in the *first* and *only* family then upon earth.

While processions are still but coldly received, images and relics have regained but little of their long-lost importance. Although they are set up to be worshipped, “ *de par le roi* ; and invested, like the priesthood, the *cent Suisses*, and all the other appendages of legitimacy, with their former dignity and powers ; yet, generally speaking, they exhibit a most forlorn and neglected appearance ; and, as they stand or tumble in their niches, are no bad barometers of the state of the rustic piety of the quarter they inhabit. We observed indeed along the high roads of France *Madonnas*, who had suffered in the wars of the revolution, and who still exhibited much of the negligence of the republican toilette, some without a petticoat, and others without a *nose* ; while the head of *St. G  n  vieve*, recently placed on the figure of *St. Peter* (distinguished by his massive key),

and a *fleur de lis* stuck under the stump of a broken-armed St. Denis, presented the evidences of days of past sacrilege, together with hopes of returning piety. The fortune of the saints has, in France, long depended exclusively on the rise and fall of the public stock of faith; and many a one, who twenty years back would not have given an assignat for a share in “the whole army of martyrs,” is now buying up the finger of St. Louis, at any price !

Wherever the royal family were expected to pass, on the occasion of the *two restorations*, or in their respective journies into the interior of the kingdom, the *via sacra* is distinguished by the new setting-up of prostrate images, and neglected crosses. The crucifix, placed at the port of Dieppe when *Madame* landed, is, I think, for size and colouring, the most formidable image that ever was erected to scare, or to edify. And the *Madonna* exhibited in the church of St. Jaques, in the same town, and on the same important occasion, was evidently, in the hurry of the unexpected honour, transported from the bowsprit of some English trader; and had doubtless stood many a hard gale, as the “*lovely*

*Betty*," or "*sprightly Kitty*," before she was removed to receive divine honours, as *notre dame de St. Jacques*; where, dressed in English muslin, and in a *coëffure à la Chinoise*, (to show she is above prejudice,) she takes her place with Louis the Eighteenth,\* who shines in all the radiance of plaister of Paris, on an altar beside her.

In travelling through Normandy, I asked our postillion, why he did not salute an image of the Virgin, which, new painted and crowned with flowers, stood in a niche by the road side? He shrugged his shoulders, and replied: "*mais c'est passé, madame, tout cela.*" Such I believe, generally speaking, is the present state of "*graven images*," and of the religion supported by "*graven images*," in France.

Speaking of the peasantry, in the neighbourhood of Versailles, "*Madame de Maintenon* observes, "*quand j'ai voulu savoir d'eux, qui a fait le Pater, ils n'en savent rien. Qui a fait le Credo? encore moins. S'ils adorent la*

---

\* This Virgin, as might be expected, warmly embraces the cause of the Bourbon, to whom she owes her elevation, and wears a wreath of lilies, and supports the *drapeau blanc*.



*vierge? oui: S'ils adorent les saints? oui-dâ. Si on pêche de manquer la messe un jour ouvrier? Oui certes."*

Of all the religious grievances of which the French peasantry and the labouring classes now complain, the interruption of business, occasioned by feasts and festivals, is the most oppressive.

Under the reign of Napoleon, idleness met no quarter, even though dictated by *saints*, or enforced by doctrines. Every body worked and prayed, according to their vocation; and interests were not crushed, nor indolence encouraged, under the sanction of ceremonies and forms, but little connected either with faith or reason. I could perceive that the religious toleration, enjoyed by the peasantry in common with the rest of the population, under his reign, was a subject to them of grateful remembrance, and they have more than once led to it, with characteristic traits, that gave them point and interest.

A peasant woman of some remote province, whom revolutionary vicissitude had placed in the neighbourhood of the village of Sevres, (and who, recommending herself to me as "*chef d'un magasin de blanchissage*,"

thus spared the dignity of my page from the pollution of a homelier term for her profession) afforded me infinite amusement in her weekly visit to our hotel in Paris, by the quaintness and *naïveté* of her observations. When I beheld her from the window, driving up the street in her *charrette*, mounted on piles of snowy linen, surrounded by her nymphs, guarded by her great dog, and led by her *garçon*, I always hastened to receive this queen of soap-suds myself, in the anti-room, leaving one of her women to arrange the official duties of her calling, with my *femme-de-chambre*, in the adjoining apartment. She was a little, shrivelled, brown woman, with black petulant eyes and marked countenance; and with her scarlet jacket, striped petticoat of many breadths, high *cornette*, and massy gold cross and ear-rings, she presented a figure and *costume*, which the very genius of masquerade might safely have adopted, both for its originality and singular effect. She was always in a flurry, always in a passion, always full of news, always full of curiosity, and frequently undertook to correct my *patois*, while I should have lamented

much, had any one corrected her's. When the weather was wet, she dried "*les gilets et jupons par artifice, madame !*" She would pardon the king much for giving "*la nation une princesse, blanche comme la neige ;*" and she called her dog "*Cleopatra ;*" because she liked the names of great men !--- "*c'est si beau, cela.*"

One day, when she was later in her weekly returns than usual, she entered my dressing-room, not in the meekness of excuse, pleading a fault, but in a passion, perfectly dramatic :

“ *Eh bien, madame, vous voilà peu contente de moi ; n'est-ce-pas ? Eh bien, c'est not' religion, morbleu, qui se mêle de not' blanchissage, voilà !*”

I could not readily understand what religion had to do with *her* vocation ; I asked what she meant. “ *Bien, vous allez voir, ma petite bonne dame. C'est not' gobe-mouche de maire, qui nous defend de faire not' lavage tel et tel jour. C'est aujourd'hui la fête de St. François, c'est demain la veille de St. Ambroise. Voilà un beau chien de plaisir que d'avoir des saints et des maires, qui nous défendent de*

*vivre.\* Et bien ! ma chère dame, on a beau crier mais voilà CELUI ! † jamais il ne se mê-*

---

\* A fine of fifteen francs is demanded, as a penalty for work done on the *jours de fête*, which are nearly of daily recurrence. Sometimes five *fêtes* occur in one week ; and a labouring man, who counted them over to me, deplored this loss of time and gain as a new and severe grievance.

*Additional Note.* In the former editions, it was mistakenly asserted, that the peasantry were compelled to attend mass. This error gave occasion to the Parisian critics, to retort by a notice of the recent prosecution, instigated by a clergyman in Essex, to enforce an obsolete statute, against the neglect of divine service. But the long-forgotten bigotry of one nation is no excuse for the tyrannical interference in another, between the subject and his conscience. It is however right to observe that this interference does not extend so far as we had at first supposed. The fine above mentioned, is not imposed for work done, but for the public exposure of the linen, during the process of drying. How far even this is strictly according to law, the author will not stand pledged. If the imposition of such a fine was one of the many instances of a "vigour beyond the law," in which individuals of the *ultra* faction then frequently indulged, the case will not be much mended. On the genuineness of the anecdote, as related by the "*reine de blanchissage*," the reader may rest with implicit confidence.

† "*Celui*" is the mystic term by which Buonaparte is now mentioned by all the lower classes. I have frequently seen "*celui*," written in all manner of ways, on gates and posts, &c. &c.

*loit de not' lavage; jamais ne m'-a-t-il defendu de sécher mes jupons et mes gilets tel jour que je voudrois. Cependant, on dit qu'il est pendu par les Anglais---tant pis; bon jour, madame !*"\*

And with this conclusion, which she did not wait to hear affirmed or denied, she scudded away, indifferent, perhaps, to the fate of "*celui*," whether he was hanged or not; but taught by experience how valuable was the toleration he had established, even to her little interests and comforts; and, like the rest of her class, drawing comparisons, under the influence of her own feelings, more to his benefit, than to the advantage of those who succeeded him.

While I was in the district of la Beauce, a farmer solicited the renewal of a lease, or

---

\* This reference to my blanchisseuse, resembles the anecdote of the old dame, who cursed *Colbert* every day she made an *omelette*, because he had put a *tax upon eggs*. I believe, however, there is no question, but that the peasantry have a general preference for Buonaparte. Those of Bourgoigne, always inclined to revolutionary principles, believed that he was returning into France at the head of an army of negroes. It was necessary to deny this, formally, in that province.

*bail*, which it was in the power of government to grant, through the interest of General de C----, whose chateau was in the neighbourhood. As he was a man of most unblemished character, and the father of a family, his application was attended to. But it having been intimated that the farmer had been married during those days of the revolution, when the *civil contract* was a sufficient ratification of the marriage vow, it was made a condition for the compliance with his request, that he should be *married over again by a priest*; as the government would naturally give a preference to a candidate, who submitted to all the forms and doctrines of the catholic church. The farmer replied, that he had been married two and twenty years to a very faithful and affectionate wife, with whom he had lived in great harmony and happiness; that his sons and daughters were growing up around them, and that he would not stamp their birth with illegitimacy, nor a virtuous woman with infamy, by submitting to a *second* marriage, which would naturally invalidate the *first*; though that marriage had been celebrated according to the laws of his country then existing.

“ I believe, madam,” said the *ultra-royalist* gentleman, who related to me the anecdote a few days after it occurred, and who knew all the parties, “ I believe it is not necessary to give you a stronger instance of the absence of all religion among our peasantry of the present day, or of their degeneracy from the faith of their forefathers.”\*

It is curious, however, to observe that some popular superstitions survive the bigotry, which once accompanied them; more especially in the remote provinces, wherever education has not yet made its illuminated progress.

An eminent physician in Paris, native of *les petites Alpes*, a mountainous district between Lyons and Geneva, assured me, that he had known a young man to be driven from his village, by the odium of belonging to a family accused “ *d’avoir un nom*,” which is tantamount to the “ *evil eye*,” in Ireland. The conjuror also preserving his “ *magie*

---

*Additional Note.* \* It is very much to be regretted that delicacy to the narrator of this anecdote prevents the citation of his name, to vouch for its authenticity. It would perfectly satisfy the most fastidious objectors.

*blanche et noire*," still retains a portion of respect; when superstition more imposing, and charlatans more dignified, have lost their credit with the people.

Of this character, once so high in consideration, Rousseau has made a charming use in his *Devin du Village*, and Farquhar a most humorous one, in his *Recruiting Officer*. It is thus that genius, among her splendid fictions, records the characteristic traits of ages and nations; and registering facts which the chronicler neglects as notorious, and the historian overlooks as undignified, preserves embalmed the most interesting features of humanity, for the contemplation of the philosopher, and the instruction of posterity.

The catalogue of popular superstitions, neither very extensive nor very various, presents nearly the same images in all countries. Melancholy sounds breathed at melancholy hours will always be portentous to ignorance; and fear will ever exert its most harassing dominion over the imagination, in seasons of sorrow and affliction. Thus, in France as in England, the howl of a dog at



the cottage of the dying peasant, is more certain death, than the disease, which kills him. And the *Irish benshi* has her *pendant* in the French owl; which is always considered "*oiseau de mauvais augure*," when she sends forth her midnight screams near the chamber of the sick. A goat in the stable is esteemed in France, a sure protection from contagion to the cattle, with which it associates, and it ranks most probably with the *bracket-hen*, which, in Ireland, holds so distinguished a place among the *lares* and *pénates* of the cottage hearth.

---

"*Je veux que le moindre paysan mette une poule dans le pot, les dimanches*," is a saying of *Henri IV.* which has rendered his memory more precious in France than all he has ever said or done beside: and this simple and benevolent "*je veux*" will perhaps survive in the memory of the nation; when the pretty "*mots de sentiment*," which royal eloquence is now made to utter, shall be forgotten; or remembered only, to be reprobated as the jargon of insincerity, dictated by bad taste.

Henry IV.\* did not live to see this philanthropic wish accomplished ; and whether his great views, and those of his able minister, would finally have produced such an effect, among their other happy consequences, the spirit of religious fanaticism, that cut short the days of France's best king, has left it impossible to ascertain.

It must, however, be a source of infinite satisfaction to his descendants, to find, on their return to the government of their kingdom, that the prayer of their great grandsire is accomplished, and that frequently "*le moindre paysan*" not only "*met une poule dans le pot, les dimanches,*" but even puts a little flesh meat into his *marmite*, on week-days. To the enjoyment of this luxury, under the reign of Louis XIV. and his immediate *successors*, there were two insurmountable barriers---the taxes of the *taille* and of the *gabelle*. The mode of dividing and subdividing the *taille*, was among its greatest grievances. When the minister of

---

\* When the death of Henri IV. was known to the people of Paris, nothing was heard, on every side, but cries of "*nous avons perdu notre père.*"

finance demanded a certain sum for the exigencies of a war, or the expenses of building or adorning a palace for the king, or his mistresses,\* (and these palaces rose like the fairy castles, which the incantations of magic conjure into existence) the tax imposed on the kingdom was subdivided, according to the superior interest of the nobility at court, who were governors of the provinces.†

---

\* Beside the continual repairs and decorations made in the palaces of Fontainebleau, St. Germain, en Laye, St. Cloud, Meudon, Compiègne, and Chambord, the most ancient of the royal palaces, there have been raised, since the reign of Louis XIV. Versailles, Marli, the Great and Little Trianon, Clugny, Maintenon (upon the aqueducts of which such large sums were expended, as excited a general murmur against its lady), Bellevue, (constructed for Mad. de Pompadour), Luciennes, for Mad. du Barry, and Bagatelle, built by the Count d'Artois, (for a wager) within six weeks. To these expensive palaces, meant solely to vary the pleasures of the king and his mistresses, must be added St. Cyr, unquestionably established as a palace of retreat, for the authoress of the dragonades and massacres of the Cévennes.

† Il examinèrent, comment il seroit possible d'augmenter sourdement les aides, la gabelle, et autres impôts. Quand tout étoit arrangé, dans le secret, avec les sang-sues publiques, les intéressés appuyoient les projets au conseil, et les faisoient passer.—*Intrigue du Cabinet*, vol. i. p. 244.

This partial division, by which the *impost* always fell lightest on those most able to bear its infliction, was again followed by a more particular subdivision; until at last the burthen was thrown almost exclusively upon those unprotected individuals, who were at the mercy of the great man, or the *great man's great man*, in every town or parish. The governors, who imitated in their provincial courts the splendor and extravagance of the king, purchased their magnificence, and preserved their situations, by exactions and extortions, which sometimes drove the people to insurrection. The memory of the *Duke de Richelieu* is still execrated in the province he governed, in the reign of Louis XV. Even the friends of the *Duke de Chaulnes* have left, in their private correspondences, such testimonies of his atrocious conduct in *Bretagne*, under Louis XIV.) as consigns this otherwise obscure and mediocre person to eternal ignominy.\*

---

\* The duke de Richelieu, speaking of his government of Guienne, observes that he could *do there what he liked*, "*où personne n'oseroit lui rien dire, étant bien avec le maître, Louis XV.*" His cruelty and exactions nearly

“ *On a fait une taxe de cent mille écus sur les bourgeois ; says Mad. de Sevigné, speaking of the capital of la Bretagne, and of the disturbances occasioned by its taxes and the oppressions of its governor) et si on ne trouve point cette somme dans vingt quatre heures, elle sera doublée, et exigible par les soldats. On a chassé et banni toute une grande rue, et défendu de les recueillir, sur peine de la vie ; de sorte qu’on voyoit tous ces misérables, femmes accouchées, vieillards, enfans, errer en pleurs au sortir de cette ville, (Rennes) sans savoir où aller, sans avoir de nourriture, ni de quoi se coucher. On a pris soixante bourgeois ; on commence de-*

---

produced an insurrection in the province, and finally caused the suppression of the parliament of Bourdeaux. It was upon this occasion, that Louis XV. made *profession de foi*, on the subject of *divine right*. “ *Je leur ferai voir (les parlemens), que je ne tiens mon pouvoir que de Dieu ; que je n’ai de compte à rendre qu’à lui, et que personne ne doit s’opposer à ma volonté ?*” How little he then suspected, that this *divine right* would not only be questioned but denied to his unfortunate successor ! In 1789, it was proposed in the National Assembly to give Louis XVI. the title of “ *Roi des Français, par le consentement de la nation,*” and to suppress the formula, “ *par la grace de Dieu.*” It was upon this occasion that *Petion* exclaimed “ *c’est calomnier Dieu ! Charles IX. étoit-il aussi roi, par la grace de Dieu ?*”

*main à pendre. Cette province est un bel exemple pour les autres, et sur tout de respecter les gouverneurs, et les gouvernantes, de ne point leur dire d'injures, et de ne point leur jeter des pierres dans leur jardins. Les punitions et les taxes ont été cruelles :--il-y-auroit des\* histoires tragiques a vous conter, d'ici à demain.*

Tragical indeed ! for twelve men were broken alive upon the wheel ; *suspected* of having conspired against the life of the all-powerful governor, who had thus goaded into madness a simple people, which could scarcely speak any language to be understood. Mad. de Sevigné drops this dreadful topic, to give the history of her pretty dog, "*Sylphide, blond comme un blondin ;*" for such was the character of the times---cruelty and frivolity---the affectation of sentiment, and the absence of sensibility !

If the *taille* was one reason, why the peasant, drained to the last farthing of his earn-

---

\* It was in this moment of national suffering, when these cruel exactions were made on the people, that Mad. de Montespan was raising her superb palace of Clugny. The disturbances of la Bretagne were perhaps the first throes of the great convulsions, which followed long after ; they proceeded at least from the same cause.

ings, could not conveniently put his “chicken into the pot,” the *gabelle* was another. And it was in such times that the French peasant, like the modern Greeks under the Turkish despotism, concealed any little hoard they might have amassed, and lived in seeming wretchedness, to escape those exactions, which would have rendered their poverty real, had it been discovered or suspected.

But no *taille*, no *gabelle* now exists, and the French peasant is at last enabled “*mettre la poule dans le pot, les dimanches.*” How long, however, this privilege, this luxury, may be retained, it is for the advocates of “*le bon vieux tems*” to declare.

The peasant’s table, in France, is of course regulated by his circumstances, and by the nature and soil of his native province. But from all I could learn, from persons of all ranks and all parties, \* plenty, even to abun-

---

\* I asked a royalist, who has a considerable landed property, whether his tenants could afford to eat meat often in the week? He answered me with petulance, “And why not?” “But (I said) it was not always so before the revolution.” “*Eh! mais non.*” And he shrugged his shoulders, and hemmed and finished with the usual: “*Mais, que voulez-vous?*”

dance, has hitherto been found among this class ; and has been interrupted only by the ravages lately made on their property by the armies of almost every nation in Europe. The presence of these armies caused enormous losses to the proprietors of vineyards ; particularly in the south, where the vines were wantonly torn up by the roots. In the pasturage districts or provinces, they make, of their *laitage*, a principal article of food, under the form of cheeses, cream cakes, and porridges ; but I observed that in France, milk was rarely taken in its simple state, as among our peasantry. In Normandy, the farms are well stocked with cows. In the Isle of France, this useful animal is so scarce, that in many places the goat's milk is exclusively used, and is even occasionally made into cheese.

The peasantry, for the most part, take four meals a-day : a very slight breakfast when they rise, which is generally of thin soup ; the grand *déjeuné* at eleven o'clock (which is, in fact, their dinner) ; their *gouâté*, or sort of luncheon, of raw vegetables and bread and butter ; and their supper, which generally consists of meat and vegetables



(as at their dinners), made into a *ragoût*. Light wine and water are their general drink; a beverage produced from chesnuts, and cider are also occasionally used; but are neither of them held in much estimation. “*Une petite goutte de liqueur,*” is a delicacy to which the peasantry are no strangers, while every village *guinguette* supplies an imitation of that foreign luxury, “*la bonne double bière de Mars*; which is of the same quality, as that very worst beverage, the “poor creature, *small beer,*” in England.

---

Hospitality is the virtue of semi-civilized nations. It is a resource against the tedium of ignorance and inanity; and none think it “greater solitude to be alone,” than those, who are the least qualified to contribute to social enjoyment. The French peasantry are said to have been more hospitable, in their days of profound ignorance and extreme poverty, than in their present improved condition. It is also certain that there are much fewer calls upon this virtue (if it be one); than there formerly must have been; when poverty was the vow, and beggary the

profession of a large class of the people. The catering friar, the mendicant monk, the wandering pilgrim, no longer present themselves at the cottage-door, to cherish a spirit of hospitality ; through the medium of a mistaken charity, or under the influence of a powerful bigotry. Competency is also so equally distributed, and industry so well rewarded, that few are urged by want or idleness to put their neighbour's generosity to the test ; while curiosity, that insatiable appetite, which so often makes the stranger's welcome, has been, during the last years, fed to surfeit, by the fluctuating crowds, which have passed from all nations before the door of the French cottage. The *droits-réunis* have likewise proved a check to the exercise of this primitive virtue ; for the hope of selling "*le petit pot de vin,*" *under the rose*,\* no longer secures to the traveller, a "collation" along with it.

---

\* Passing by a little *guinguette*, in *la Brie*, I perceived written over the door in French, as old as the '*romance of the Rose*, the first line of Rosalind's epilogue, "Good wine needs no bush." The proverb, therefore, was common to both countries.

“ *Tout pays, où la mendicité est une profession, est mal-gouverné,*” says Voltaire. I should suppose, from my own observations, that the country in the world the most infected by mendicity is Ireland; and the country the least taxed with this disgusting and always vicious branch of community, is France. The whole of this order, now existing there, may be comprised in those little groups of cripples, which neither disgust by filth, nor annoy by importunity; and which, gathering round the traveller’s carriage on the high roads, quietly detail the infliction, which induces them to interest the benevolence of the “ *très charitable monsieur.*” “ *C’est une vérité incontestable,*” says Chamfort, speaking of the state of France, on the eve of the revolution, “ *qu’il y a en France sept millions d’hommes, qui demandent l’aumône, et douze millions, hors d’état de la leur faire.*”

This frightful picture of national poverty is corroborated by Mr. Young, who made his second tour to France at this period, and who observes that the original sin of its institutions struck at the root of national

prosperity, and produced a poverty, which “reminded him of Ireland.” The improved condition of the lower classes has had an inevitable influence on the evil of mendicity, and the hopes of idleness and imposture were finally crushed by the laudable efforts of the Comte de Pontecoulant.\* This gentleman began his salutary reforms upon the class of *fainéans*, during his prefectship at Brussels, and receiving the sanction and assistance of the imperial government, drove the young and indolent into the workshops and manufactories, and placed the old and infirm in asylums and hospitals. How far the revival of old institutions, the return of the religious orders, and the encouragement of religious houses, may have an effect upon this suppressed class, it is impossible to say; or whether some future preacher in the pulpit of St. Leu, or St. Gilles,† may not give a new impulse to his flocks; and again address

---

\* The comte de P—— distinguished himself in the revolution. Loaded with honours by Napoleon, he was made count of the empire, peer, senator, and commandant of the legion of honour.

† Formerly noted, as the parishes of *convulsionnaires* and beggars.

to them the words, humorously attributed to the ancient *curé* of that parish---“ *mes chers gueux, qui risquez les galères, en passant votre vie à mendier, entrez dans l'un des quatre ordres mendiants, vous serez riches et honorés.*”

The virtue of charity therefore, like that of hospitality, lies at present latent, for want of objects to call it into action. But if latent, it is not dead. There is no nation more strongly endowed with that physical sensibility, which promptly responds to the cry of suffering, and which awakens that ready and uncalculating sympathy, “ whose pity gives, ere charity begins.” The readiness with which an orphan, or unprovided child (the *illustre malheureux* of some village or hamlet) is adopted by a friendly neighbour or benevolent relative, is a proof that charity wants neither the means, nor the feeling to bestow its relief, when circumstances call upon its exertion.\*

---

*Additional Note.* \* No point in these volumes, has been contested more vehemently, than that of French mendicity. How far the overwhelming mass of distress, which crowds the streets of Dublin, may have produced in the author a tendency towards overstatement, it is not for her to say. There were last winter seventy thousand

Country girls and children, without shoes or stockings; things calling themselves women, but in reality “walking dunghills;” and “ploughmen at work, without *sabots*, or feet to their stockings,\*” are details given by a

---

persons in that city in want of assistance; most of whom plied, more or less, frequently in the streets for relief. At all times the doors of shops in Dublin are crowded with mendicants.

That the beggars in France could not be numerous, is a self-evident proposition, determinable *à priori*. It cannot be imagined, that a government, which stood in need of the conscription laws, would allow many sturdy beggars to escape from the army; besides an agricultural population must necessarily produce less mendicity, than one addicted to manufacture. A little less railing against foreigners, and a little more attention to what is passing at home, would in no respect diminish the numerous points of superiority, which place Englishmen in so elevated a rank among Europeans. They would do well also to remember that if they are better than their neighbours, it is because their ancestors were more free; and that if they would have their children equally distinguished, they must transmit to them, unsullied and unbroken, the privileges which their forefathers have delivered down in charters, stamped with the energy of their minds, and bathed in the purple of their blood.

\* This *partial* covering of the leg is universal among the peasantry of Ireland, at this day, under the name of “*traheens*.” And “*I doat upon your traheens*,” is a phrase of endearment, commonly used as indicating “*I doat upon the most miserable article about you*.”

liberal English traveller of the state of the French peasant's wardrobe, in the year 1788. Still, however, even then, the French peasant had his "*habit-de-fête*," like the Irish cotter, who appears in the tattered garments of misery all the week, to be enabled to exhibit his *blue frize cota-more*, and best brogues, at the Sunday "pattern," or yearly fair.

There is an intimate connexion between vanity and poverty. Ostentation is the legitimate offspring of both. The peasant toilette of France now extends itself to the every-day comforts of working apparel. During my residence there, I did not see one instance of a bare-footed, or bare-legged person, not even among the children; and "*être bien chaussée*," seems a passion in France, from the *petite maîtresse* in her cobweb "*bas de coton*," at thirty francs a pair, down to the *demoiselle Georgette*, who draws her "*bas de laine*" tightly over the smart ankle she has no objection to exhibit.

The details of dress, among the peasants, appear to vary in every province, and to rule in each with a precise and undeviating uniformity. One bright colour may be seen glowing through a whole commune; and one

stripe maintains its supremacy over the petticoats of an entire *arrondissement*. Thus, “*un gros rouge*” is the delight of the dames of Auvergne; and “*un bleu céleste*” the passion of the *élégantes* of Limousin.

In passing through Picardy and Artois, I observed that, while the old women preserved the lofty *cornette* of ancient times, the young had adopted the high mitred *coëffure* of the Chinese modes; a fashion which, though long *passé* in Paris, was, as the hostess of an auberge where we stopped in Abbeville assured me, in her town “*une nouveauté la plus nouvelle*.” In general, however, caps with immense borders, that sweep below the shoulders, and straw hats, are the prevailing head-dresses upon all occasions. The petticoat and corset, almost invariably of two distinct colours, relieved with white sleeves, of linen, or woollen web: gold chains round the neck, fastened with a heart, and suspending a large gold cross, are elegancies of the toilette scarcely ever dispensed with upon any occasion; and are frequently worn even upon working days.

The district of the *Cauchois* is the very *foyer* of the Normandy fashions, and a fair



Cauchoise, perfectly “*endimanchée*,” or attired in her Sunday finery, exhibits a complexity of costume, to which many centuries must have lent their progressive inventions; which probably began under William the Conqueror, and received its last finishing touches on the arrival of *Madame*\* at Dieppe. The cap of the fashionable Cauchoise emulates, in height, the steeple of the church, which is the mart of her finery; her *luxé de jupe* is typical of its dimensions, and the enormous gold-drops, which vibrate in either ear, rival in length and weight the pendulum of its clock.

It is curious to observe, that such nearly was the dress of the better order of dames, in the days of Charles IX. and that the peasantry were, under his cruel and bigotted reign, better clad and better conditioned, than under that of Louis XV. “All” (says an author, whose researches into the ancient costumes of France are extremely profound)

---

\* When Mad. D’Angouleme landed a second time in France at Dieppe, all the old *poissardes* and ancient dames of the town, dressed in full costume, went down to the port to receive her royal highness, and insisted on drawing her carriage to the town-house.

“ all the peasantry then wore “ *des souliers commodes* ;” but this was not the case, under the reign of “ *le bien aimé*.” The taxation, which went in part to supply the toilettes of Dubarry and de Pompadour, naturally limited the elegancies of the peasant-wardrobe, and even obtruded upon its necessities, as Mr. Young’s “ *moving dunghills*,” at that period, evince.

The influence of the toilette is universal in France, and it is far from being exclusively an object of female devotion, even among the peasantry. The young farmer “ *qui se fait brave*,” is, in his own estimation, as attractive, as any *merveilleux* of the *chaussée D’Antin* can suppose himself. His well-powdered head and massive queue, his round hat, drawn up at either side, “ *pour faire le monsieur* ;” his large silver buckles, and large silver watch, with his smart white calico jacket and trowsers, present an excellent exhibition of rural coxcombry ; while the elders of the village set off their frieze coats with a fine flowered linen waistcoat, whose redundancy of flaps renders the texture of the nether part of their dress very unimportant.

But, however tasteless or coarse ; however simple or grotesque, the costume of the French peasantry may appear to the stranger's eye, it still is a *costume* ! It is a refinement on necessity, and not the mere and meagre covering of shivering nature. It is always one, among many evidences, that the people are not poor, are not uncivilized, that they require the decencies of life, and are competent to purchase them.---When an Irish peasant with his usual shrewdness endeavours to *drive a hard bargain* with his employer, his phrase is frequently : “ *Sure, all I ask is just what will get me my bit and my rag* ; for all his ideas of dress consist in the words “ *my rag.*” These are painful references ! they are perhaps too foreign, and too frequent : but they are irresistible ! But where is the land so distant, the region so remote, into which I may travel, and not bear Ireland in my memory, and her misery in my heart ! When shall the pen, now employed in tracing the prosperity and civilization of another country, be devoted to record the improvement, the tranquillity and happiness of my own ! When shall it leave the fictions, which have been made the medium for exhi-

biting the causes of her errors and her sufferings, to register the facts which shall prove, that the first are removed, and the last are forgotten !

---

On our way to France, we had taken a very circuitous route, and passed through a great part of England. We found the beautiful peasant population of that country, with its fair tranquil Saxon physiognomy, transparent complexion, and rounded muscle, a dangerous preparative for eyes destined to meet a people, whose beauty can scarcely be reckoned among their national perfections. The French face, particularly among the lower orders, struck me forcibly, as having a general resemblance to the Tartar visage. The high but flattened cheek-bone, small eye, low forehead, with the close concentration of the features, formed a very prevalent cast of countenance, in such of the provinces as I visited. There are, however, even among the lowest classes, some very splendid exceptions to this general line of physiognomy ; and I think the two handsomest men I ever saw, were a miller, near

Amiens, and a workman, at the manufactory of porcelain at Chantilly, well known in his native town by the distinguishing appellation of “*le bel ouvrier.*” It was in vain he showed us the *Majesty of France* smiling, with his “*sourire paternel,*” on a tea-cup; or the royal dukes and duchesses smirking in family amity on a punch bowl. We still thought the workman superior to his work; and he indeed seemed perfectly of our opinion; for no “*héros d’opera*” ever played off the graces of attitude with a more studied or ridiculous effect, than did *le bel ouvrier de Chantilly*, for the benefit and admiration of the English visitants of his manufactory.

The French physiognomy, however, varies almost in every province; and they themselves class the shades of beauty and ugliness with great precision, even in the neighbouring districts, by the terms “*beau sang,*” and “*vilain sang.*” This singular phraseology assimilates with what may be called the elegant slang of English *bon ton*; which, by introducing the pedantry of the stable into the jargon of the drawing-room, enables the connoisseur in beauty and horse-flesh equally to compliment “Thunderbolt by Vixen,” and

Lady Virginia, descended from a Plantagenet dutchess, with the common declaration, that they are both “thorough-bred,” and “show excellent blood.”

In the *pays de Beauce* the “*vilain sang*” is said to prevail; in its neighbouring district, la Pêrche, the “*beau sang*” is very distinguishable. In Normandy, the land of law, and loveliness, the beauty of some of the women rivals the charms of the witches of Lancashire; and every where among the girls, are to be met charming samples of “*la jolie*,” that indefinite style of prettiness, which the French prefer to every other; and which, by them at least, is deemed “*plus belle que la beauté même*. Béarn, the native province of Henry IV, is celebrated for the beauty of its inhabitants, and particularly for the elegance, form, rapidity of motion, and grace of gesture of its Basques: a race of peasantry in one of its districts, whom it is the pride of the *noblesse Provençale* to bring into their family, as upper servants; and to exhibit in their salons, at Paris, as pages, dressed in their own original and beautiful costume.

I one day accompanied the Princess de

Craon\* to the hotel de Biron-Gonteau, and was in the formal act of presentation to the Dutchess de Biron, when a figure suddenly appeared in the garden pavilion in which we were received, which cut short my half-finished courtesy, and rendered even the amiable dutchess, with her historical name, an object, for the moment, of secondary consideration. While Madame de Biron was saying the most obliging things in the world, and in the most obliging manner, and while I, "nothing loth," lent "a pleased ear," my eyes pursued (though with some difficulty) the flitting motion of a light aërial figuré, elegant and fanciful as the poet's image of "a feathered Mercury." This splendid apparition, in a costume singular and picturesque, passed through the pavilion into the garden. "*C'est le Basque de madame la duchesse, et dans le costume de son pays,*" said the Princess de Craon, observing the im-

---

\* To this venerable and excellent lady, whose high birth is among the least of her merits, and indeed to almost every member of her illustrious family, I stand indebted for the most flattering attentions, and for much of the social pleasures I enjoyed, during my residence at Paris.

pression which this "fair page" had made on me.--"*Courir comme un Basque, est un proverbe de Provence,*" added the princess, "*et vous voyez, qu'il ne le dément pas.*" He was at that moment flitting among the trees of the garden, with the arrow-like swiftness attributed to the Hirkahs, or public messengers of Hindoostan.

We afterwards adjourned to the terrace of the garden, which overlooked the boulevard Italien, through which the royal *cortège* was passing (for it was the *entrée* of the young Dutchess de Berri, into Paris), and the Comte d'H---e, who accompanied us, took infinite pains to name to me the distinguished persons, who preceded, followed, and surrounded the *calèche* of the king; including the marshal Marmont, M. Talleyrand, Père Elisée, et *tutti quanti*. But still the beautiful Basque, and his beautiful costume, were to me objects of greater attraction, than all the *grandeurs* which followed in the suit of the royal bride.

She herself, I thought, looked pale and timid; and rather stunned than delighted by the loyal acclamations which rent the air from voices, that perhaps had recently given



their “*vivas*” to a very different *entrée*;--- while the countenance of the Dutchess d’Angouleme, more in distrust than in timidity, seemed such as she might have worn, when evincing her contempt of the national instability to her cause, she boldly answered to the often prostituted “*nous jurons.*”--“*Swear not, but obey.*” It was indeed a countenance more in anger, than in “sorrow” or in joy; and the very reverse of that of the “buried Majesty of Denmark.”

If the peasantry of France are not all Basques, their defect of beauty does not arise from deficiency of nourishment; for I do not think I ever saw a greater number of persons, who seemed sent into the world, “*pour faire voir jusqu’où peut aller la peau humaine.*” “*Le bon gros père,*” “*la bonne grosse-mère,*” are epithets frequently used and justly applied, and the old philippics of *frogs and soupe-maigre* now fall hurtless against ribs, deep in their covering, as any of the best new light prizes exhibited at the Woburn shows. Among this order, indeed, Miss Prescott, the *Pythoness* of English *embonpoint*, might acquire new hints for her

science of *anti-phthisis*, and apply them for the benefit of meagre dowagers and attenuated young ladies, with successful effect.

The improved condition of the French peasantry has indeed operated with equal benefit, morally and physically. The destruction of the feudal system, with all its oppressive train of taxes and imposts, has produced a national regeneration. Even the despotic laws of the conscription, which peopled the armies of France by means even more odious than the press-gang system of England, has been counteracted in its effects, and repaired in its losses, by the ameliorated state of the people, by the division of the enormous landed properties, the equal participation in succession, and by the great encouragement given to the progress of vaccine inoculation.\*

---

\* The French army was essentially national, since by the law of the conscription it was composed of all the citizens, without distinction of class. This was the secret which filled up the fallen ranks of the French legions, and which reconciled the lower classes so patiently to its infliction. It was on the higher classes it fell with the greatest severity, if indeed the gentry of France ever had any profession but that of arms, or any object of ambition

In 1781 the *contrôleur-général* of France, under Louis XVI. *Monsieur Joli de Fleuri*, defined “the people” of France; to be “*peuple serf, corvéable, et taillable, à merci et miséricorde.*” It was the misery of this “*peuple serf,*” that urged the cause of the revolution; it was this “*peuple corvéable et taillable, à merci et miséricorde,*” who showed no mercy for their heartless oppressors. It was this race of slaves, degraded, trodden on, broken down, strangers to liberty, to morals, and to religion, who were urged to commit those horrors, for which they are so unjustly upbraided; and whose national mildness and natural goodness of disposition might well yield to the temptation of satisfying a vengeance, which the wrongs and slavery of ages had ripened, nourished, and fomented into madness.

---

but military glory. I asked the wife of a farmer in the Isle of France, who had lost a son by the conscription, whether she did not rejoice in the downfall of him, who had instituted that despotic law? “*Pour celui,*” she replied, “*il nous a fait trop de mal, pour que nous disions du bien de lui; mais il nous a fait trop de bien, pour que nous en disions du mal.*”—And this, I believe, is the sentiment of the nation.

But that long-enduring race have now passed away; their children are proprietors, where they were vassals. The torture no longer exists, to feed a spirit of brutal ferocity by its horrible exhibitions. Bigotry no longer presents to them with the same effect, idle forms for real principles; they have nothing to fear from the “*droit de chasse*,” the “*corvée*,” the “*taille*,” the “*gabelle*.” They have tasted a practical freedom, not less perhaps than that enjoyed by the people of England; they are moral as the people of Scotland; and notwithstanding the recent ravages, they are more prosperous perhaps than either. Long may they continue to enjoy the advantages for which they have so dearly paid; and in spite of that “*scourge of fire*,”\* with which an English minister is

---

\* I copy here a paragraph from a letter, which I have this day received (December 29th, 1816) from Paris, from a gentleman of considerable talent and experience, in the present state of things in France, “*Votre Canning a tenu ici des propos d'un ton, qui n'étoit pas propre à rapprocher les deux nations, et qui sont bien inconsiderés pour un homme d'état. Il dit, il y a quelque tems, dans un cercle nombreux, où étoient beaucoup de militaires nou-*

said lately to have threatened them, may they boldly resent and timely oppose every

---

*veaux, que le gouvernement des Bourbons étoit trop doux pour une nation, aussi turbulente et aussi factieuse que la nôtre; Mais que l'Angleterre se chargeoit de nous tenir sous une verge de feu! Les militaires n'ont rien dit, et Mad. de Stael s'est chargée seule de répondre à ces insolences."*

"Comme M. Canning parloit des victoires, que les Anglais avoient remportées, elle lui dit, que si ces messieurs vouloient une seule fois se détacher des Russes, des Prussiens, des Allemands, &c. &c. &c. et nous honorer d'un tête-à-tête, elle lui promettoit de n'être pas refusé! "Notre Canning" made himself extremely popular among the *royalistes enragés*, when I was in France, by his speech at Bourdeaux, in which he called that loyal city "*le temple de Madame.*" For many evenings successively I never entered any of the *salons* of my royalist friends, that this *mot de sentiment*" was not echoed about in all sorts of maudlin, whining tones. "*Le temple de Madame!! Ah que c'est joli! Le T-e-m-ple de Madame! Mais c'est charmant, c'est beau.*"

"*On voit bien, madame,*" said a royalist to me, who had repeated this *mot de sentiment* upon every change and key of the sentimental gamut, "*on voit bien, madame, que votre Canning est un homme à sentiment, avec infiniment d'esprit! Le temple de madame! Ah que c'est beau!*"

*Additional Note.* The condition of the peasantry, forming the most important feature in the physiognomy of a go-

effort made by domestic oppression or foreign invasion, which may tend to bring them

---

vernment, a greater body of interests and of passions, has arrayed itself against this book, than against any of the subsequent parts. The reader will however observe, that in her notices of the state of France under the ancient *regime*, the author has not referred to *modern or republican authors*; but has taken the confessions of the *courtiers and adherents of Louis XIV. and XV*: confessions the more authentic, because they escape from persons, unconscious of the secrets they have betrayed to posterity.

As far as respects particular facts, they are either detailed from personal observation, or from the narrative of persons, whose authority is quoted.

It may further be remarked, that no legitimate objection to the general proposition can be taken on account of those provinces, whose condition is less comfortable than the rest. Though all are not *equally rich*, all are more or less *improved*, if the uniform opinion of persons of all political creeds, with whom the author had the benefit of communication on this subject, may be trusted. The operation of the law against unequal distribution of property by will, and that of the conscription; in diffusing wealth, and in repressing a superfluous population, must have necessarily produced effects, such as have been described in these pages; even were other considerations totally out of the question. But let the dispassionate reader call to mind the outcry which this work has excited among the whole cohort of hirelings on both sides the water; and the author will be content to stand or fall by

back to that state in which they were declared, by the law of the land, to be “ *un peuple serf, corvéable et taillable, à merci et à miséricorde !* ”

---

his decision, whether it be the *truth* or the *falsehood* of her statements, which have given birth to so much animosity and malignity.

# FRANCE.

---

## BOOK II.



### SOCIETY.

“ A mesure que la philosophie fait des progrès, la sottise redouble les efforts pour établir l’empire des préjugés.”





# FRANCE.

---

## BOOK II.

---

### S O C I E T Y.

*National Characteristics.—Sketch of Manners, before the Revolution.—During the Revolution.—Under the Imperial Government.—Actual State of Society and Manners, in France.—“The Children of the Revolution.”—Royalists.—Ultra-Royalists.—Constitutionalists and Buonapartists.—Conversation.—Raconteurs.—Political Vaudevilles.—Tone of the Circles.—French Youth.—The Elève of the Polytechnic School.—Religious Institutions.—School of Ecouen.*

**N**ATIONAL idiosyncrasy must always receive its first colouring from the influence of soil and of climate ; and the moral characteristics of every people be resolvable into the peculiar constitution of their physical structure. Religion and government, indeed, give a powerful direction to the principles and modes of civilized society, and

debase or elevate its inherent qualities, by the excellencè or defect of their own institutes. But the complexional features of the race remain fixed and unchanged, the original impression of nature is never effaced.

The portrait drawn of the ancient Gauls, by Cæsar, preserves its resemblance to the French of the present day, notwithstanding the various grafts that have been inserted into the national stock : and Agathias and Machiavel have nearly given the same sketch of the same originals ; at periods of very remote distance, and with views of very different tendency. Susceptible and ardent, impetuous and fierce, the most civilized of all the barbarians, whom Rome subjected to her yoke, are still the most polished people of Europe ; and the French, through all the vicissitudes of their political fortunes, through all the horrors of the most sanguinary epoch of their revolution, have exhibited that inherent tendency to social attachment, that capability of generous devotion, and that fund of *bon-homme* (to use a word of their own creation for a feeling peculiar to themselves), which evince that the worst form of religion and government

could not destroy the happy elements of character, out of which such kindly dispositions arose. The atrocities, which stained the most unfortunate æra of the revolution, were in some measure redeemed by the constitutional virtues, which exhibited themselves during its progress. Condorcet, condemned to death, yet refusing the asylum which friendship risked itself to offer him, is but one out of a thousand examples of noble disinterestedness and heroic devotion.\*

When humanity snatched one breathing moment from blood and terror, to bestow it on social intercourse; when all the quarters of Paris gave that well remembered civic dinner in the public streets, to which all were bidden, and to which all were welcomed, the tide of social affection, long frozen in its channels, suddenly dissolved,

---

\* Condorcet, pursued by the terrorists, received an offer of protection and concealment from a female friend: he peremptorily refused this generous offer, exclaiming, "*Vous seriez hors la loi!*" "*Eh! suis-je hors l'humanité?*" was her answer. This heroic reply did not prevail upon the unfortunate fugitive: he fled from the asylum of the friend, whose safety was more precious than his own, and survived but a few days.

and flowed in its wonted genial current. The impulses of joy were universal; strangers rushed into each others arms; friends, long severed, clung in close embrace; and the sanguinary tyrant of the hour saw, in this sudden burst of friendly communication, the revival of the national "*bon-homme*," and the downfall of his own power. A decree was issued against the recurrence of such festivals of the heart; but it was published too late: the avenues of social feeling were again opened, and the *civic dinner* was the passover of an emancipated people.

The frightful system of despotism, laid by the ferocious tyranny of Louis XI. and accomplished by the ambition and pride of Louis XIV. produced an obvious and fatal influence on the character of the nation. The independence of the nobility, which bent before the open force and direct hostility of the barbarian king, moulded into irretrievable ruin, before the enfeebling corruption of the more accomplished despot. Against this prime destroyer of the liberties and morals of his devoted people, history appeals to posterity: for the cotemporary

chroniclers, who undertook their task at royal command, and stained her page in time-serving obsequiousness to the vanity of their employer, were insensible to the national degradation they recorded. When Boileau and Racine recited to the monarch, and to his mistresses, the glories, pomp, and power of his reign,\* these courtly poets, but feeble historians, felt not that the annals which flattered the pride of the vain-glorious king, condemned the despot of a ruined people to immortal ignominy. The unprofitable wars, by which the insatiate ambition of Louis XIV. endeavoured to extend his

---

\* After a dangerous illness, the king permitted Boileau and Racine to amuse him, by reading aloud some pages of the history of his reign, which Mad. de Montespan had engaged them to write. The king heard them, seated between his two mistresses; the one in the height of her power, the other in her wane. To account for the distinction thus conferred upon his ex-favourite, Louis said; "*Il est bien juste, madame, que vous assistiez à la lecture d'un ouvrage, dont vous même avez tracé le plan.*" The history of Louis le Grand, commanded by himself, planned by his mistress, and executed by two pensioned poets!!! What a combination! Buonaparte, speaking of Louis XIV. said, "*C'était un pauvre homme, — s'il existait, je n'en voudrais pas pour mon aide-de-camp.*"

dominion; the lavish expenditure of incalculable treasures, dissipated in idle amusements, or squandered on gorgeous palaces, left his people beggared, and his finance exhausted. His despotic supremacy suffered no trace of political liberty to exist; and the fatal example of his own private life spread the dire contagion of vice and of hypocrisy through every class, and opened the gates of systematic depravity to his successors, which never closed, till the whole temple of corruption was

“hurled headlong,  
With hideous ruin, and combustion, down.”

In the history of civilized society there is, perhaps, no parallel for the moral degradation which enveloped France, during the whole of the eighteenth century. It was a demoralization so perfect, so unrestrained, and finally so unconsciously subsisting, sapping, corrupting, gangrening every social and moral relation of life, that towards the end of the long reign of Louis XV. scarcely one tie that binds man to man remained unbroken or undefiled: all was pollution, or degradation, political profligacy, or moral

delinquency. Fiction and fact, history and romance, all that described, and all that imitated the morals and manners of these days, reflect their disgusting details with frightful fidelity. It is the illustrious Bussys\* and St. Simons who attest the enormities they so faithfully picture. It is the high-born Richelieu, who has immortalized the depravity of that elevated class, whose vices are found epitomized in his own history of his own life. From the careless and spirited details of the brilliant de Sevigné, down to the imitative and ingenious fictions of the Marivaux, Crebillons, Louvets, and the La Clos, a code of corruption might be drawn, so perfect in vice, so matchless in crime, that not the hardiest champion of the "*bon vieux tems*" would dare to defend it, or could refrain from astonishment, that "such things could be,"

---

\* Comte de Bussy Rabutin, author of "*Histoire Amoureuse des Gaules*," and of "*Mémoires*." It is curious to observe, that the intimate and most admired friend of the amiable Mad. de Sevigné was M. Pomenars, a noted *coiner*, though a man of rank. He was repeatedly tried for his life; and Mad. de Sevigné frankly declares her belief, that he was guilty of every crime, but poisoning.



“And overcome him like a summer’s cloud,  
Without his special wonder!”

When the measure of political abuse was filled to overflowing; when not a ray of freedom was left to the people, not a shadow of representation to the nobility; when venality stalked forth in the stole of sanctity, and Simony held an open market; when privileges were substituted for rights, and influence usurped the forms of legitimate power; when exaction and oppression went hand in hand through every enormity, and the poison of moral corruption had worked its leaven through the whole mass; then the bond of society was rent asunder; and the great and final *bouleversement*, which followed, was only proportionate, in its progress and effects, to its origin and causes. The first explosion, bold, brilliant, and aspiring, as the ascending fires of pyrotechny, was followed by the admiration, and consecrated by the vows of all that was enlightened and liberal in Europe. Even royalty watched its commencement without fear, as its light pierced the gloom of the dungeon, and brightened the mansions of living sepulture; and philosophy gloried in its career, as she

beheld the darkness of prejudice dissipated by its blaze, and the frightful edifice of despotism sink under its influence.

But, though the revolution was an event devoutly wished by the liberal, and ardently forwarded by the wise ; though all the talent and all the genius of the nation concurred in

“ Mutual league,  
United thoughts and counsel, equal hope,  
And hazard in the glorious enterprize,”

they could but direct its spirit, and guide its views. It was the physical force of the nation, which could alone carry the design into effect. It was the collected mass of the most political degraded people in Europe, which was to bear it on ; and the cause of freedom was inevitably committed into the hands of slaves. It was to no race, like the Myrmidons of Achilles, swarming forth, and changing their species,\* that the work of de-

---

*Additional Note.* \* For the satisfaction of the critics, it is necessary to state, that the myrmidons were a race produced by the transformation of ants into men.---See *Ovid's Metam.* Book 7

It appears that in the old times, as in our own day, the gods raised up adherents and partizans to great men in

vastation was consigned. Those who gave the revolution its sanguinary character were no miraculous progeny, no spontaneous product of the new order of things, but the home-bred children of despotism, who, like

their misfortunes, by the mutation of vile and obscure objects, into personages of importance. The myrmidons of our modern Achilles,

‘Οἱ ἐρὶς τε φίλη, πολέμοι τε, μάχαι τε,

are of the same cast, as their prototypes in the days of king *Æacus*.

“Mores quos ante gerebant  
Nunc quoque habent.”

The meanness, vulgarity, and rapacity, which characterized their humbler existence, still remain conspicuous in their elevation; and their sting unrefined by change, is still more remarkable for its poison, than for its pungency.

The whole observation, contained in the paragraph to which this note is appended, is mere matter of fact: namely, that the democrats of 1792 were born and educated under the ancient *regime*. But in order to traduce the author, and to mislead the public, the reviews have falsely misrepresented her, as implying that Louis, and not Marat and Robespierre, were the anarchists.

“Attonito cum  
Tale, super cœnam, facinus narraret Ulysses  
Alcinoo, bilem aut risum fortasse quibusdam  
Moverat, ut mendax aretalogus.”

*Juv.* 15. l. 14.

the “yelling monsters” of Milton’s Sin, turned against their mother, and

“Howl’d, and gnaw’d her bowels, their repast.”

Familiar with sights of blood, to which the public executions had inured them,\* their own wild deeds were governed by their horrible experience. Sympathy long deadened, and sensibility long blunted, by the very nature of their institutions; they had now none left to exercise, or to bestow, on those who had thus degraded them. It was these long passive and thoroughly debased subjects of abused authority, who, creeping from their dens, shadowed by the Bastille, followed in the train of their tiger-leaders; who, glutted with blood, yet thirsting for carnage, taught the dreadful lesson, that those only who are educated in liberty, are

---

\* In the history of human cruelty, there was nothing so atrocious as the criminal punishments of France. Mad. de Sevigné mentions, in the course of her letters, above fifty persons broken alive on the wheel, and two ladies burned by a slow fire; of whom, one was accused of sorcery. Damien and Ravailac were torn to pieces by horses, after tortures the most horrible: “the question,” or torture, was a thing of every-day occurrence.

capable of forwarding her cause; who evinced that many revolutions must occur, and many systems of government arise and fall, ere the stain of vassalage can be effaced; ere the mark of the chain can be worn from the neck of the captive, and the freeman forget that he had once been a slave!

As it is the fashion of the day purposely to mistake constitutional principles, for democratic speculations, so it is its policy to revive and bring forward the horrors of the revolution as "bug-bears dressed to frighten children," into all that can be imposed or inflicted. Images of long-passed crimes are conjured up, to spread terror, to awaken indignation, to increase prejudice, and to render the people of two great nations the victims of the old state policy of "divide, and govern." But it should be remembered, that the generation which perpetrated these atrocities, *were the legitimate subjects of legitimate monarchs, and were stamped with the character of the government, which produced them.*

The race, however, have long passed away, which immolated, on the same altar, plebeian worth and royal virtue; who included

in the same mighty hecatomb the champions of loyalty and the advocates of freedom, the La Tremouilles and La Rochefoucaulds, with the Rolands and the Condorcets; all that was precious in the annals of ancient chivalry, with all that was distinguished in the records of modern philosophy. Mature in life, when the scene of their iniquities opened upon this "horrid crew," it soon closed upon their guilt; and the Marats, the Dantons, and the Robespierres, who belonged equally to the order of things which preceded the revolution, and to that, which filled up the most frightful of its epochs, can never re-appear; unless a similar corruption in the government, and an equal degradation in the nation, shall prove again the inevitable connection, between oppression in the ruler, and worthlessness in the people.

The nobility of France, including all the higher classes of society, are distinguished, in the early annals of their country, by a boldness and an energy of character, which not even the iron cages and loathsome dungeons of their determined foe, Louis XI. could subdue. But what his oppression could not effect, the vicious court and cor-

rupting despotism of Louis XIV. accomplished. In the whining sycophants, who shed tears when the monarch frowned;\* who canvassed the honour of becoming *the husband of his mistress*, or of yielding up their daughters to royal concubinage, it is difficult to trace the ancient baronial independence, the high sense of honour, which produced the *Guesclins* and the *Bayards* of earlier days.--- Amidst the orange groves and luxurious pavilions of Versailles, among priests and parasites, in childish amusements, and in womanish gossip, expired that once brilliant spirit, which gave to the French cavalier his peculiar tone of gallant intrepidity. The energy and vivacity, distinguishable through the political and religious struggles of the League, were no more, and that careless desperation, which induced the chiefs of the

---

\* Even "*le vertueux Pomponne*" is described as *weeping*, when the king reproved him; and Monsieur *kneels at the feet* of his royal brother, to thank him for a favour conferred on one of his friends. Mad. de Maintenon's own picture of this "*cour inique*," as she calls it, is curious: "*Nous y voyons des envies, sans sujet, des rages, des trahisons, sans ressentiment, des bassesses qu'on couvre du nom de grandeur d'âme.*"

Fronde to embark in a cause, scarcely understood, to please a beauty, scarcely known,

“ de faire la guerre aux rois,”

or,

“ de faire la guerre aux dieux,”

this bright ethereal spark of national fire was exchanged for a flame, cold and putrescent as the marshy exhalation, and fit only to light the idolatrous altars, raised by a parasite aristocracy, to the worship of a vain-glorious monarch.---The group of slaves, which the flattery of the sculptor has placed at the feet of the most gorgeous statue of the most gorgeous of kings, aptly images the higher classes of society, by which he was surrounded.\*

The courtiers of Louis XV. not less feeble and more depraved, not less abject and more vicious, resolved all human dignity into the maxim of “ *représenter noblement.*” How

\* When this famous statue of Louis XIV. was thrown down, in 1792, the name of the celebrated artist, Girardon, was found written on one of the feet of the horse. Chamfort rather harshly defines this *humility* to be “ *la modeste bêtise d'un homme de génie, qui se croit honoré de travailler à la gloire d'un tyran.*”



possible it was to *représenter noblement*, without one noble principle or manly virtue, the innumerable memoirs of the innumerable “gay Lotharios” of those days of egotism and vanity best evince.

The transition from the finical refinements and solemn puerilities of this age of dramatic representation, to the bold, coarse, republican tone of revolutionary manners, was singularly rapid, and curiously contrasted. To the *ennui*, exhaustion, and inanity, which characterized the insipid circles of a worn-out race, succeeded an exaltation of head and a glow of heart, productive sometimes of the noblest, sometimes of the most tragical, and sometimes of the most ludicrous effects. The self-immolation of Charlotte Corday, the dauntless heroism of Madame Roland, belong to the best æra of Roman patriotism. The revengeful feelings, which arising, almost beyond the tone of human vindictiveness, pursued the dying moments of Robespierre,” “breathe a browner horror” over deeds of darkness, than the deepest shades of tragic fiction\* have ever reached :

---

\* When Robespierre stood upon the steps of the tribunal, vainly appealing to a people over whose passions he

and there is nothing broader in farce, than the vicissitudes of the Abou Hassans of the early part of the revolution; when the “rabble rout” of Porte St. Antoine assumed the *toga* of *Patrician dignity*; when Caius Marius, the cobbler, discussed the rights of the people, under the domes of the Capets; and Cornelia, the fishwoman, distributed black

---

had now lost all influence (for his last hour was come), a spectral figure, tall, gaunt, and fearful, which had for some time moved closely beside him, now continued to murmur at intervals in his ear, in a hollow and monotonous tone, “*tu n’es plus rien, tyran; l’échafaud t’attend.*” Robespierre in vain endeavoured to frown away this evil genius—his frown had lost its terror, and his voice its command.

Another instance of *poetical justice* attended the death of this sanguinary monster, which marked the frightful vengeance of the times. When his hand missed its aim, and he shot himself through the jaw instead of through the brain, he was carried to the *hôtel de ville*, and laid upon the council-table, from which so many of his horrid decrees had issued. A woman, who had walked close beside the bier on which he was carried, with a countenance of fixed despair, took her station at his head, and gazed on his mangled form with looks of unglutted vengeance; for he had been the murderer of her son. In the agonies of a burning thirst, he called for something to drink. “*Bois ton sang,*” she replied, pressing his hand, “*tyran, tu as toujours aimé le sang.*”

bread to her ragged *marmots*, with the conscious feelings of the mother of the Gracchi.

It was during these national Saturnalia, that the Rochefoucaulds, the Talleyrands, the Mirabeaus, became immersed in the mud they had raked up from the “*lie du peuple* ;” and now suing those, so lately the slaves of their power, humbly craved “the most sweet voices” of the swinish multitude, who thus

“*Prank’d it in authority, against all noble sufferance.*”

In this moment of general subversion, all was transition the most violent, and extreme the most opposite ; evincing a people from whom all principles had long been withheld, by arbitrary power ; and who, when released from its restraints, became the slaves of their own unbridled and ill-directed will. ‘Trifles the most puerile, and events the most important, equally occupied the public mind ; and while the government was daily changing its forms and its chiefs, objects the most insignificant became enveloped in the universal transmutation. Streets changed their names, hotels their distinctions, rooms their furniture. ‘The *place Louis Quinze* became the

“*place de la Révolution.*” Where the Sevignes and the Richelieus presided over the elegant circles of their day, the *Montagnards* now howled, or the *Chouans* vociferated; and Brissot and Condorcet opposed to the wild inspirations of vulgar anarchy, the bold, fearless eloquence of patriotism and genius: where, haply, Voiture had once recited his insipid verses to applauding dutchesses, when the “*Guirlande de Julie*” was deemed the *nec plus ultra* of the intellect of the nation.

All the lumber of aristocracy, material and immaterial, was placed under the ban of popular aversion; and the *armoires* of Boule, and the tapestry of the Gobelins, submitted alike to revolutionary rage, with the fortunes and the lives of their noble owners. While the time-honoured *bergère* drew down the imputation of bad citizenship, the “*divin tabouret*” was a sure stepping-stone “*à la lanterne*”—Josses and buffets gave way to Etruscan vases, and antique tripods; and the venerable “*canapé,*” denounced and proscribed, yielded to the usurpation of couches, which Praxiteles might have designed for the apartments of Aspasia—Even the splen-

did *pendules*, which had presided in the royal palaces over hours

“ *That danced away with down upon their feet,*”

submitted to the common fate; and while the time-pieces of Versailles and St. Cloud were sold for old brass, Flavius, the hair-dresser, consulted his sun-dial, and asked of Memmius, the cast-clothes’ man,

“ I prithce, citizen, what shadow of the day is it ?”

Religion too, still struggling for her supremacy under any name or form, adopted “ the changeful fashions of the day.” *Heathen altars* rose, where holy *reposoirs* had once held their stations; the scite of mythological rites, long consecrated to Christian devotion, again resumed its original name and purpose; and the venerable church of the thrice-blessed *St. G  nevi  ve* became the “ *temple of all the gods.*”

But, while the people and their demagogue-leaders thus evinced the inherent frivolity of a long degenerating people; while modes and manners rapidly changed their form and colouring, with successive constitutions; the principle of regeneration was

slowly working out its way, through the tissue of folly and ferocity that opposed it. The public spirit and good sense of the nation, its genius, and its patriotism, under the names of Federalists, Brissotins, or Girondins, stood opposed alike to the bad taste and bad feeling of a wild democracy, which had ranged itself under the protection of the deities of Olympus. The regime of terrorism threw a *mauvaise odeur* over the republican jargon of the modern BRUTI, and the tone of society, during the reign of the Directory, stood much less indebted to the getting-up of articles from the classical dictionary, than any which had been adopted since the first æra of the revolution.

While, however, manners were tinctured with all the exaggerated feelings of the day, and partook of that ridicule, to which all exaggerated feeling is liable, the nation was making a silent but sensible progress in morals and illumination. Mothers now gloried, or affected to glory, in that sacred name; infancy no longer drew its sustenance from a hireling bosom; nor was childhood bereft of all the endearments of home, or driven from the enjoyment of domestic affection to

the chilling cells of a convent, and the cold attentions of purchased care. Daughters became members of their own families; sons were taught by their fathers that they had a country; and Nature, righting herself even amidst the outrages committed on her, obtained an influence over the feelings and actions of society, to which, in France, she had long been a stranger.

It was at this period that a series of glorious conquests abroad, and an anarchical struggle for power, at home, called forth a new arrangement in the government of the state. The people were worn out by a rapid succession of constitutions, which had as yet produced little tangible good, and taken no permanent form. They sought a chief, whose influence might compose the still fermenting mass of public opinion, and throw the tie of unity over contending factions. Military glory, "which grew with what it fed on," had become the object of national enthusiasm; and the people, like the friends of Coriolanus, deeming, that

———"Valour was the chiefest virtue,  
And did most dignify the wearer,"

chose for their ruler the greatest captain of

the age,\* and placed *him* by acclamation on the throne of France, who had already laid the thrones of continental Europe at her feet.†

Napoleon Buonaparte, elected Emperor of the French, preserved unsullied, during

*Additional Note.* \* This expression, *faute de mieux*, has been made matter of reproach, as if it raised Napoleon above the Conqueror at Waterloo. *At the period in question*, Napoleon unquestionably *was* the greatest Captain of his age.

*Quantula cunque adeo est occasio, sufficit iræ.*

† “My brother,” said Lucien Buonaparte, “is the most *legitimate monarch* in Europe; for he is the only one chosen by the voice of the people.”

Buonaparte had indeed made himself popular by many little acts of generosity and *bon-homme*, which, in whatever cause they originated, had their effect on the army and the lower classes. After the battle of Arcola, he was walking alone through the camp at night, when he perceived a sentinel asleep upon his arms. He took his fusée gently from him, and placing him on the ground, kept watch on his post for nearly two hours. The soldier at last awoke, and perceiving an officer doing his duty, was panic-struck; but when the next moment he discovered that this officer was the Commander-in-Chief, he exclaimed, in a tone of despair: “*Buonaparte! Je suis perdu.*” Buonaparte returning him his arms, simply observed, “*après tant de fatigues, il est permis à un brave, comme toi, de s’endormir mais une autre fois prends mieux ton tems.*”



the first period of his reign, the popularity, which had given birth to his elevation. Personal merit had now reached its just standard of appreciation in a country, where all factitious distinctions had long been reduced to their intrinsic value; and talent, still holding its supremacy, became the passport to imperial protection. The arts and sciences rallied round the throne of him, whose conquests had so considerably extended their resources,\* and whose liberality had lavished such munificent rewards on their numerous professors. Hereditary rank came forth from its ruined towers, to hail the founder of a new dynasty, who promised remuneration, for a portion at least, of what the revolution had confiscated. The descendants of the ancient defenders of the good kings Raoul and Hugh Capet, lent their time-consecrated support to a fourth race, as their ancestors had struggled for, and crowned a second and a third. Many of the most ancient nobility of France had remained in the country, and

---

\* Buonaparte expended thirty millions of francs on objects of art and antiquities, besides those he obtained by conquest.

weathered the storms of its successive revolutions: the Rohans, the Mortemarts, the La Rochefoucaulds, the Beauveaus, the Praslins, the Birons, the Brissacs, the Montmorencis, the Talleyrands; in a word, the most illustrious names in the historical annals of the nation, filled the anti-chamber, or assisted in the councils of a chief, who courted their representatives with deference, received them with kindness, and loaded them with honours.

Every day some erasure was made from the list of emigrant proscription;\* the descendants of the “*menins*”† to the “*monsieurs*” of feebler days, became the *friends* of the reigning sovereign; and the “*guidons* of

\* Napoleon was so anxious to have the ancient nobility about his person, that he left no means untried to bring them over. One day he erased the names of so many emigrants from the list of proscription, that his minister remarked, “*Comment donc, Sire, vous allez rayer le Comte d’Artois, et son frère?*” To which he replied, “*Et pourquoi non? Est-ce qu’ils ont porté les armes?*”

† The *menins*, or *unions* of the dauphins of France, were ten young gentlemen kept about his person to dissipate his *ennui*. They had six thousand livres pension, “*pour être assidus auprès du dauphin.*”

the royal lily”\* ranged themselves under the standard of the imperial eagle. All factions were now blended in one ; and it was reserved for this singular founder of his own fortunes to cement and establish his power, by operating a fusion of all parties in his own favour ; thus presenting, in the first and wisest era of his reign, a combination of talents, feelings, and principles, which had long been given to the support of opposite and contending systems. The leaders of the several former constitutions now joined in upholding one ; and preserved the recollection of their ancient feuds no further, than to lament that they ever existed.

It was a dogma in the new political creed of Napoleon, that the ancient noblesse of the country, though essentially allied to the fallen dynasty, might be rendered an equally firm and brilliant support to his own ; and while a sort of romantic passion for historical names† abetted the policy, which led him

---

\* See the Marquis de Sevigné's complaints at remaining a *guidon*, at the age of forty.

† Napoleon was very proud of being *gentil-homme*. One day, at Vienna, the Emperor of Austria, in reply to

to re-establish the families which bore them, the descendants of the ancient barons of France were nothing loth to receive new dignities, or the immense revenues that were given in lieu of their ancient possessions, even from the hands of a *parvenu* sovereign. "It is astonishing," said M. de Talleyrand, "how many emigrant ladies, of the old court, wish me to force them to become *dames d'honneur*, in the new." And it is a well known fact, that many of the *ci-devant* "*ducs et pairs*," who now talk in raptures of the "*ineffable félicité dont jouirent leur pères, sous la paisible durée de l'empire héréditaire*," were then proud to display their grand chamberlain's ribbon, in the imperial anti-room; and courted smiles and accepted favours from the munificence of him, whom they now contemptuously mention, in the presence of legitimacy, by the epithet of the usurper!

Among the ancient nobility, Napoleon

---

his boast on this head, observed that he had seen in the imperial library an old account of the Buonaparte family. Napoleon eagerly begged the volume as a present from his father-in-law, who answered, drily, that it had been taken from the library, during the occupation of Vienna by the French.

had many personal friends, who justify their allegiance to him by arguments difficult to refute.\* They did not give up their hereditary princes, till all Europe had likewise abandoned them; till Russia, Prussia, Austria, Spain, nearly all the *legitimate* authorities of the continent, had *deserted the cause of legitimacy*. When these potentates had acknowledged the power which the French nation had chosen for itself, the Bourbons became in France what the Stuarts had been in England; and all that it had once been virtue to uphold, it then became treason to defend. With such sanction for their tergiversation, the nobility felt at that period, with the rest of the nation, that he, round whom they rallied,

“ More worthy interest had done the state,  
“ Than those, the shadows of succession.”

---

\* Buonaparte's preference of the old nobility went so far, that he ordered the *prefets* to give the “ *petites magistratures de village*” to the poorer gentlemen, for whom no better employments could be made out. This preference was regarded with great jealousy by the rest of the nation, with whom it had long been resolved into a maxim, that all the citizens should be the “ *enfants de leurs actions* ;” and in whose eyes all who served the state were equally noble.

The court of the new Charlemagne, filled with the descendants of Preux and Paladins, assumed a character of gothic grandeur, wholly destructive to that tone of republican simplicity, which *Brutus* Buonaparte had once contributed to establish.\* The house of brick became a palace of marble. The fairy splendours of the Caliph Aaron-al-Raschid were united to the cumbrous magnificence of the middle ages. The stately formalities of the Escorial presided over the circles of the Tuileries; and the costumes of the Valois and the Medici fell in heavy folds over forms, which had long exhibited their symmetry in the adhesive drapery of Grecian sculpture.† Even the old stage properties of royal legitimacy came forward, on the scene of imperial representation; and the decorations of the legion of honour

---

\* Buonaparte and Casti, the author of "*gli animali parlanti*," had been known to each other during the fervor of the revolutionary times. When Casti was afterwards presented at the imperial court, the Emperor addressed him with "*Eh bien, Signor Casti, êtes-vous toujours démocrate?*" "*Plus que jamais, Sire,*" replied the poet. "*Je vois que les grands hommes toujours déburent par là.*"

† The costumes of the two Medicis were assumed by the empresses, at their coronation.

were distributed from the casque of Guesclîn and the helmet of Bayard; while the chair of Dagobert was furbished up to receive the representative of the western emperors, and the iron crown of Lombardy was cleaned and polished, to encircle the brows of a new king of Italy, the successor of the Cæsars.

The *fastes* of France now rivalled those of ancient Rome, in its most splendid days. The government, once defined to be a despotism, "*tempéré par une chanson*," was now a despotism, veiled in a *halo* of splendour. The riches of Europe were poured into the coffers of the state; potentates were visitants or prisoners in the palaces of its capital, and their territories were included within the boundaries of its dominion. Works of Roman magnitude, beauty, and utility, arose on every side: all that was mean was removed; all that was noble was revived; all that wore the air of improvement received the sanction of authority; and society, taking its tone from the colossal grandeur of the government, was massive in its forms, splendid in its draperies, energetic in its spirit, and brilliant in its details. The insipidity of the "good old times," and the

ferocity of the revolutionary days, were alike denounced by the reigning *bon-ton*; and *les Muses et les Graces*," with their old "*cortège les ris et les amours*," were dismissed in company with the phrases and figures of rhetoric, the tropes and images of jacobin oratory.

The character of the nation seemed to assimilate itself to that of the chief; and its inherent activity, taking a high direction, was no longer diverted by enfeebling institutes to insignificant objects, nor worked upon by temporary exaltations to frenzied violence. The public deportment and occupied life of the emperor, put the exhibition of vice and the appearance of idleness out of fashion. There were no mistresses of state;\* no Pompadour or du Barri to

---

\* Whatever might have been the irregularities of the *man*, they made no part of the parade of the *sovereign*.—A *petite pièce*, by Etienne, was represented at the theatre of the Tuileries, in which it was said, that "the ladies of the court made colonels in the army." The emperor, who was present, showed evident signs of disapprobation; and as he passed through the apartments of the palace, where the ladies in waiting were at cards, he stopped, and said to some of them, from whom I had the anecdote, "*Eh*



give royal sanction to private profligacy, and to convert female caprices into reasons of state. No games\* were played at court, which in the city were prohibited under pain of death. No elegant swindlers, like the Pomenars and the Grammonts,† played off their *fourberies* with their jokes; nor exhibited their dexterity and their wit, at the expense of their honour and their characters. So little were the pleasures of the table appreciated by him, who seemed to make all pleasures subservient to his ambition, that

---

*bien, mesdames? est-ce vous donc, qui faites les colonels? Voilà ce que je n'avois jamais soupçonné."*

\* "*Hocca.*" See Mad. de Sevigné's Letters.

† It was the Comte de Grammont himself, who sold for fifteen hundred livres his own manuscript memoirs, in which he is painted as an accomplished swindler. Fontenelle, the censor of the work, refused to approve it, out of feelings of regard to the noble family de Grammont. The count complained of this to the chancellor, to whom Fontenelle explained his reasons. De Grammont, however, would not lose his fifteen hundred livres, and obliged Fontenelle to approve the amusing memoirs of his own dishonesty, rendered immortal by the wit and talents of his kinsman, Anthony Hamilton. Pomenars, the intimate friend and guest of Mad. de Sevigné, was repeatedly tried for his life, as a *coiner*; and having defeated the law, paid his lawyer with his own false money.

the gastronomic science fell into disrepute, with the other revolutionary tastes; and the *chefs de cuisine* might have meditated a conspiracy against the contemner of their art, if Cambaceres and his “*camarades de mangerie*” had not kept alive their hopes, until the return of those times, in which, as the *Duc de D---s* lately expressed it, “*la majesté du trône est placée dans la cuisine.*”\*

The society of Paris had now wholly changed its classification with its tone. It was no longer composed of “*Modérés*” and “*Montagnards*,” of jacobin chiefs and republican leaders. These “rough-headed kerns” in the costume of *brigandage*, no longer swarmed in dusky groups in the salons, nor filled the public places with their ruffian figures; but they were replaced by a circle of popes, and kings, and potentates, and princes, *en grand costume*, and habits of ceremony.

Where the humble fiacre was once for-

---

\* Napoleon was temperate, even to abstemiousness, at table, and has been known to rise from it the moment he had dined, without regard to the unsatisfied appetites of the company, who, by etiquette, were obliged to leave the table when he retired.

bidden to roll, by republican severity, the equipages of foreign sovereigns now “stopped the way;”\* and “*monsieur le cocher, si votre maître n’est pas Roi, vous ne passerez pas,*” was no uncommon denunciation from the sentinel, who guarded the avenues of the opera; where kings assembled as familiarly and numerous, as at the *table d’hôte* of the adventurous Candide.†

“*Ne prévoyez vous pas que j’aurai bientôt trois ou quatre rois sur les bras?*” was the reply of Lucien Buonaparte to a friend, who reproached him with his economy. “*Il est passé roi*” was the military cant of the soldiers, when Bernadotte retired from the army; just as “*il est passé sergent*” was applied to a comrade, who had arrived at the dignity of the halbert. To be made a king, was, indeed, a sort of respectable retreat‡

\* At one period of the revolution, to be seen in a carriage, was to be suspected of royalism. Even hackney coaches did not ply.

† The house-maid of our hotel observed, in its commendation, that “when the kings and princes used to visit Paris, we had our share of them, *tout comme un autre.*”

‡ When the throne of Portugal became vacant, Jerome Buonaparte, Soult, and Murat, were candidates for the office.

for a marshal ; and the sceptre was no unfrequent expectation for those, who had wielded the *bâton* with credit and utility.

When James of England sought an asylum at the court of France, the poets of the day sung it as an event of glory in the annals of the nation.

“ Et la cour de Louis est l’asyle des rois,”

was a boast re-echoed with pride. But it was reserved for the Emperor of France to sit covered in a congress of bare-headed sovereigns, in his own palace,\* and in halls, where Louis XIV. danced for the amusement of *his* subjects, to command tributary princes to waltz for his own.† Even the descendant of that branch of the Bourbon family, whose succession to the dominions of Spain cost the *grand monarque* so much blood and treasure, was now seen quietly

---

\* When the monarchs of the confederation of the Rhine assembled in Paris, in 1809, Napoleon alone sat covered with a velvet hat and feather, at an entertainment given to the royal guests.

† It was a line in Racine’s “ *Nero*,” that first taught Louis XIV. the absurdity of dancing *courantes*, and performing ballets, for the amusement of his courtiers.

abiding in the territory of his ancestors, at the country house of the Emperor's grand chambellan; converting the woods of Valencay into bon-fires, to celebrate the successive victories of his conqueror; or lighting the casements of his prison to show his devotion to the sovereign,\* who had deposed him: while the successor of St. Peter, whose predecessors had so often shaken the thrones of Europe, now became alternately the guest

---

\* Ferdinand, the beloved, never failed to celebrate the victories of the Emperor, at the expense of the woods of Valency, the beautiful seat of Talleyrand, who complained bitterly of these royal depredations. The king of Spain lived in great privacy during his residence in France, devoting himself chiefly to the society of Brunet, the excellent comic actor of the Variétés, and of a certain agreeable dancing-master. I know not, whether this *dieu de la danse*" accompanied his majesty back to his dominions; but it is well understood that Ferdinand made some very tempting offers to Brunet for that purpose. Brunet, however, had no ambition to follow in the steps of his predecessors, Montfleuri and Farinelli, and declined giving up those talents "to a party, which were meant for mankind." It would be curious to speculate on the probable influence of such a *maire du palais* at the Escorial, who would perhaps have in time supplanted the grand inquisitor, by "*Jocrisse père*," and have substituted the amusement of a good comedy for the national recreation of an *auto da fe*.

and prisoner of him, by whom his own had been reversed.\*

---

\* Pope Pius VI. was described to me, by one deep-read in human character, and who had lived in habits of intimacy with the holy father, as blending in his character the eager curiosity and simplicity of a recluse, with great natural shrewdness and intelligence. Paris opened a new scene of observation to this dignified monk; and he expressed his wonder and admiration, with all the *naïveté* and frankness of childhood. "I have seen a great deal," he observed to one, whom Napoleon had recommended to him as a *Ciceroné*, "but I have not yet seen the *palais-royal*: pray, let us go there." "*St. Père*," returned the baron, "*c'est impossible*;" adding, that it would commit the character of his holiness, and compromise the discretion of his guide. "But I would go," replied the pope, eagerly, "*travestito da curato*." This extraordinary masquerade did not, however, take place. While the pope remained in Paris, a number of idle boys made a trade of assembling under his windows, to sell his benediction; which they did by crying "*les bénédictions du très St. Père, pour deux sous*;" and when they had collected a crowd, and received the money, they commenced an outcry, calling to the pope to appear, and to bestow his benediction, in the same manner as the English mob called for "*Blucher*" and "*Emperor*," when those personages were in London. The pope always complied with their demand, appeared, and gave the required benediction, perfectly unconscious of the trick that was played on him.—His amiable manners won golden opinions from all who had access to him; and as far as he was known in

When the republican forms and revolutionary manners, which had so long prevailed over French society, yielded to modes of superior refinement; and the “*teinture de la ridiculité*,” which characterizes exaggeration, faded into a propriety adapted to all principles, it was the wisdom of the reigning chief to efface the recollection of the horrors, which had marked those days of violence, and to adopt the same merciful policy, by which Henri IV. obliterated the dissensions of the League. His *personal enemies* were forgiven, even if they were neglected;\* while not one of his *personal friends* was forgotten.† Among the first

---

France, either as guest or prisoner, he was popular, pitied and admired.

\* “*Il va être amnistié*,” was an expression in vogue, when I was in Paris, for a state prisoner who was about to be executed. With Napoleon, the word “amnesty” always preserved its original signification.

† When it was represented to Napoleon, that Carnot was conspiring against him, he replied, “*Lui!—il est incapable de trahison*.” A remarkable instance of his dislike to the revival of past events occurred, when Chateaubriand was received at the Institute, in the place of the celebrated Chenier. Upon this occasion Chateaubriand, in the eulogy of his predecessor, alluded to the part that brilliant

persons to whom he sent the legion of honour, were two of his early companions, who rejected them indignantly, as pledges of a despotism they never intended to acknowledge:\* and if some of the many he raised, betrayed him, and shamed themselves, even

---

wit had taken in the revolution, and revived the recollection of times, which it was so necessary to bury in oblivion. The Emperor would not hear of this firebrand being thrown; and the illustrious martyr was rejected from the number of the elect, although in the same discourse he had lavished the most boundless homage on the man he has since stigmatized with so many epithets of opprobrium, but whom, in his *Atala*, he declares was sent from heaven, “*en signe de réconciliation, quand il est las de punir*”

\* Monsieur le Mercier, and Monsieur Ginguené, both obstinately refused the favours he tendered them, without forfeiting his regard, or incurring his persecution. It is a singular circumstance, that of the multitude of persons, devoted friends, and avowed enemies of Napoleon, who talked to me respecting him, not one accused him of ingratitude. A republican, who had been the friend of his youth, but who had refused some distinctions he had offered him, told me that the Emperor one day in conversation made this remark to him: “*Je ne suis pas bon, si vous voulez, mais je suis sur.*”—And, in fact, added this person, “*on pouvoit toujours compter sur lui.*”



his enemies acquit him of ever forgetting a favour, or neglecting a friend.

But ambition, and the world, alike conspired to turn the head of a man, who, with qualities to fight his way to the summit of human greatness, wanted the higher, rarer gift, to preserve his equilibrium in the giddy point to which he had raised himself. His mighty fall was preluded by all those symptoms of error and frailty, which seem ever to have accompanied the possession of unlimited power; which made the madness of Alexander, and produced the downfall of the Cæsars. The nation he had dazzled, rather than degraded, watched with suspicious jealousy the strengthening of his power, and the extension of his influence. Had it chosen a despotic form of government, unquestionably it would have preferred Napoleon for its chief; but the fermentation of revolutionary feelings had now subsided into principles of constitutional right, and of rational liberty. England had long been the model of France, and she then little dreamed that England would be the first to start forth, to forbid the imitation of her own bright example; or, by the all-prevailing alchymy of

superior force, change her chain of gold into links of lead, rescuing her from the lion's grasp, only to submit her to the influence of the *torpedo*.\*

When it was believed that Napoleon had said "*J'étouffe en Europe, il faut respirer en Asie,*" the sentence† was taken by the people as the epigraph to his ambition; and when public opinion loosened from the chief, public spirit rallied the nation. The explosion against domestic tyranny was universal; but no provision was made against foreign conquest; and the country and the ruler, the temple and the idol fell together. To have moved steadily in the dazzling sphere that fate had assigned him, was all that was required of this meteor of a moment. But retrograding into old systems, he soon fell,

---

\* The French fully expected that the allies would leave them to the choice of their own government, if they remained faithful to the treaty of Paris.

† When the venerable Gregoire, the ex-bishop of Blois, who always opposed the views of Buonaparte in the senate, spoke against the creation of the new nobility, he made some allusion to Cæsar. Buonaparte observed with a smile, "*Pourquoi s'avise-t-il de parler de nous autres?*"

One of his flatterers observing to him, that the nation looked up to him, "*as a god!*" he shrugged his shoulders,

to rise indeed for a moment, to irradiate and amaze; and then sunk, to rise no more. But though his light be extinguished, the track of his course will long brighten the political horizon of Europe. Others will gleam, where he shone, and fade, and be forgotten; but though many will rejoice in his extinction, none will ever forget the splendour of his blaze, nor the rapidity of his motion.\*

---

and replied, "*Un dieu! c'est là un cul-de-sac.*" After the battle of Marengo, it was observed to him that not one of his staff was killed: he replied, "*Ils étoient avec moi, ma fortune les préservait.*"

*Additional Note.* \* It is upon these paragraphs (if on any) that the charge is founded, of an undue partiality in the author, for Napoleon's government. Yet she distinctly states him to have inclined so strongly towards despotism, as to have alienated his earliest and most respectable friends! She is too decided a friend to constitutional liberty to disguise this dark shade in Buonaparte's character. But now, that the danger of his tyranny is passed for ever, it becomes a duty to be just to his merits; especially since his failings are made the never-ending source of apology for the absence of all political virtue in others. Every liberal and sensitive mind will indeed be naturally borne, even to an exaggeration of his good qualities, by the mere force of those calumnies and misrepresentations, which men of shallow intellect and abandoned principle,

My visit to the capital of France was paid in the spring of 1816; and whatever length of days be granted me, I shall always recur to that period, as among the few delightful epochs, preserved in the memory of the heart; over which time holds no influence, and to which even selfishness may turn, when sensibility shall be no more. Circumstances the most flattering, rendered my position in French society the most favourable for that general view of the several orders, which the peculiar events of the times had multiplied and assembled in Paris. The agitated surface, still heaving with recent commotion, was strewn with relics of remote time, thrown up from the bosom of oblivion; and it was covered with specimens of all the recent political systems, which had reigned in France, since the first great social irruption. Characters belonging to different ages, opi-

---

heap upon his memory, for purposes the most dishonorable and dangerous. It may be truly said, that the unworthy treatment which the ex-emperor has received from the literary agents of his enemies, has compleatly succeeded in removing that hatred which Englishmen once bore towards him; and in substituting an enthusiasm, perhaps not more reasonable.

nions supported in distant eras, dogmas the most novel, prejudices the most antiquated, philosophy the most sceptical, bigotry the most inveterate, opposition the most violent, submission the most abject,—all appeared mingling on the scene of daily intercourse, as if the discomfiture of some powerful enchanter had suddenly released the multifarious victims of his magical influence ; who, resuming their peculiar forms, presented an assemblage at once the most singular and the most contradictory.

Among many of the various groups, which made up the pleasant masquerade of Parisian society, I had the good fortune to be introduced, through the medium of some light effusions, for which an elegant translation had obtained some popularity. Known alike to “*royalistes modérés*,” and to “*royalistes exagérés*,” to constitutionalists and to imperialists, were I to score up the sums of kindness I received from each, it would be difficult to decide, in whose favour the balance of my account would turn. But while I endeavour to “catch the living manners as they rise,” I would anxiously impress the conviction, that I am painting *classes*, not

*individuals*; and that, in generalizing the features, which mark the peculiar properties of each order in the social system, it is my wish to tread lightly on the *amour-propre* of a people, whose excellence and virtue it is, to respect, and to spare, the *amour-propre* of all the world.

The interregnum, which occurred in the French government, in 1814 and 1815, was a *pierre de touche* of public opinion; and it evinced the progress which constitutional principles had made in the nation. Those who still survived of the constitutionalists of 1789, those who had raised their voices in the *first* cry of liberty, now raised them in the *last*; and appeared again upon the scene of action, still struggling against despotism, whatever form it might assume. They combatted not for the Emperor nor for the king. For a series of twenty-five years they had preserved their principles unchanged; the terrors of an infuriate democracy had not daunted them, the splendor of a brilliant court did not dazzle them. They had long, indeed, abandoned their earlier Utopian dreams; but they invariably cherished that pure bright spark of patriot fire, which had

been their column in the wilderness ; which had shone upon the path of their exile, brightened the shed of their retreat ; and which now, when genius has become suspected, and patriotism treasonable, shines over the abode of their voluntary retirement, and marks the spot, where wise men may come and worship.\*

But though the La Fayettees, the Carnots, the Gregoires, and the Ginguénés, have again

---

*Additional Note.* \* This passage, among many, may serve to refute that calumny, which taxes the author with confounding the Buonapartists and constitutionalists of 1789.—Madame de Staël has observed that, “ *L'on a souvent repeté dans la révolution Française, qu'il falloit du despotisme pour établir de la liberté.*” Neither she, nor any of the constitutionalists were the dupes of this sophistry ; but in controlling the march of despotism, a temporary or even ambiguous auxiliary cannot always, with entire convenience, be rejected ;”\* and the two parties have been obliged to act together, against the Bourbons. The one sought the liberty, the other the military glory of their country ; and they had both good reason for making common cause against the new government. In what manner the constitutionalists were compelled to adopt Napoleon at the epoch of the hundred days, will appear in the fourth Appendix. The whole tenor of these volumes, indeed, and the eulogium of La Fayette, are compleat refutations of the present misrepresentation.

\* Life of Lord Charlemont,

receded from the unequal contest, to the bosom of philosophical retirement and of domestic virtue, their transient appearance on the scenes of public life revived many a drooping hope; and called forth spirits, and awakened energies, which still remain buoyant on the surface of society; to add to its fermentation, and to increase its interest. Almost the whole of those who make up the thinking class of society (including the men of professional and scientific research), are constitutionalists: and with this large and superior portion of the population is now blended the greater number of the Buonapartists; who, hopeless of their own lost cause, and having nothing to expect for themselves, extend their views, once confined to their party, to the political welfare of the country. Some, however, whom Buonaparte rescued from the deepest obscurity, are now the most zealous adherents of the king; and, commuting only the terms royal and imperial, offer the same fulsome homage to Louis XVIII. they so profusely lavished on Napoleon.

While the mass of the population is stigmatized by the royalist party with the epi-



thet of “ *les enfans de la révolution* ;” while, as I heard it expressed, “ *la race qui date de 1789 est proscrite par des vieillards, et la jeunesse est marquée du sceau de la réprobation* ;” these children of the revolution are distinguished by all those indications of freshness, vigour, and energy, which belong to a new or regenerated people. This circumstance, united with the inherent vivacity and impetuosity of the French character, gives a tone of excitement and animation to their existence, which it is cheering to witness, and resuscitating to participate. That charming maxim of French urbanity, that in the salon “ all ranks are equal,” and the position, that “ *l’esprit est une dignité* ,” were an acknowledged truth even in the days of the most over-bearing aristocracy. But if there ever was a period in the history of any nation, in which man lorded it over situation ; in which individual merit took precedence of all factitious circumstances, that period now exists in the society of France.---The nation is no longer to be deceived by sounds, nor amused by toys, to be

“ Pleas’d with a rattle, tickled with a straw.”

It has been experimentally proved, through the conflicting revolutions, how little artificial distinctions availed, though consecrated by time, and upheld by prejudice. *Man* alone is now the object with man; and *talent* the star, which governs the ascendant of public opinion.\*

While titles and riches have been scattered with a prodigal hand to plebeian merit, and to serviceable indigence, their splendor and dignity have been still further eclipsed by the changes resulting from frequent revolution; which have built up and dispersed, elevated and degraded, with the transiency and instability of a fairy dream: and a primitive simplicity, an absence of ostentatious display, in the reigning modes of life, have arisen in France, which aptly assimilate themselves to the tone of the public mind. It is among these contemners of old systems, these vigorous disciples of a practical philo-

---

\* Public opinion has undergone a great change, since the late Duc de Castries observed, in speaking of the noise made by the quarrel between Rousseau and Diderot, "*Cela est incroyable, on ne parle que de ces gens-là; gens, sans état, qui n'ont point de maison, logés dans un grenier; on ne s'accoutume pas à cela.*"

sophy, these *children of the revolution*, that the remains of a worn-out race, the mouldering relics of ancient errors, are again brought back; to throw their chilling influence over awakened energy, and to impose restraint upon new impulsions, like the snows, which fall on the burning bosom of Hecla, or the ashes of exhausted fires, which a passing wind scatters over the vigorous vegetation of Sicilian plains.

When the armies of the allied sovereigns had restored the Bourbon dynasty to its ancient dominions, the royal representative of that long venerated race returned to the capital of his kingdom, like the antiquarian, who rises from the depths of Herculaneum or of Portici, encumbered with relics, and accompanied with the remains of other times. The sudden resurrection of a long-buried aristocracy, "bursting its searments," added another class to the existing arrangement of French society; brought into intimate contact the races of two distinct ages; and mingled the recovered medals of antiquity, with the bolder stamped currency of a present coinage. The old emigrant nobility, and their scarcely less antiquated offspring, who

accompanied, followed, or joined the king, from all parts of Europe, evinced, that in the transit of more than the quarter of a century, they had suffered only in the out-works of their construction, from the attacks of time, or the innovations of the age. The citadel of opinion was impregnable; experience had made no breach, example could make no impression; and the cumbrous edifice remained indestructible by reason or by proof: dark, compact, and narrow, covered by the mould of centuries, and guarded by prejudices originating in ignorance, and cherished by selfishness.

These inhabitants of the "sleeping wood," suddenly recalled from their suspended animation, soon convinced the children of the revolution, that "*ils n'avaient rien appris, comme ils n'avaient rien oublié,*" and that the "toad, adversity, ugly and venomous," were not, for them, a "precious jewel in its head." The *guidons* of the lily, too soon, placed the snowy standard of peace in the grasp of vengeance, who waved it over the monument of Quiberon,\* and stained it with the blood of

---

\* This monument was raised by the Bourbons, to commemorate the slaughter of the emigrants at Quiberon.

the brave, and the tears of the afflicted. This long-forgotten faction, on their first return to France, rallied unanimously round the throne of the Bourbons, under the common and long proscribed name of "*royalistes*." But personal interest soon divided general opinion; and the polypus dissection then distinguished itself under the classes of "*modéré*," and "*ultra*."

The *modérés* ranged round the king, the *ultras* round the princes; the one desired to keep by moderation, what they had obtained by preference; the others wished to seize by violence, what they had not gained by election. The "*tout prendre*" was the sole maxim and principle of both. The *royalistes modérés*, consisting of the "*vieilleries*" of the old times, preserved an hereditary devotion to the representatives of their ancient kings, which they had imbibed in days peculiarly favourable to that sentiment; and satisfied with their portion of the plunder, they submitted to share the spoils with the *roturier* Buonapartists, whose services and talents had placed them high in the ministry of their own regime. The *ultras*, made up of young men, led by younger chiefs, more

ambitious than sordid, more devoted to the Bourbon *faction*, than to the Bourbon *representative*, sought to guide the helm, as well as to “share the triumph and partake the gale.”

Thus, while personal interest and personal vanity appeared to be the basis of the political principles of both, the interests of the nation were left to the private discussion of those, who dared to turn their thoughts to that hazardous point, at the risk of subjecting themselves to the imputation of jacobinism. Balanced in the measure of their talent, and equally careless of the consequences of their conduct, these two factions occupy the foreground of the scene; and intimately associated, yet fiercely opposed, avowing one principle, yet pursuing different measures, they seem to imitate the warfare of the monkey tribes; who make war on their own species, and threatening vengeance from their opposite trees, grind their teeth, and chatter, and grimace, in expectation of that moment, when they may commence with safety to bite, to claw,\* and to exterminate.

---

\* A very highly endowed ultra-royalist, Mons. C——, said to me a few days before I left Paris; “You may

While such appears the political position of the royalists *ultra* and *modérés*, their place and character, in private society, is marked by all the peculiar traits of their descent and cast: and though there are a multitude of exceptions to the general outline of the sketch; though taste and talent, domestic virtue and social amiability, are to be found amongst individuals of both factions, yet the prevailing hue of their “*manière d’être*” has a strong taint of the *old times*, and something of the tone, style, and modes of the courts of the three last Louis’s, is still to be found in the descendants of the “*gens comme il faut*,” of those noted days. It is in these circles, that the *bureaux d’esprit* of the *hôtel Rambouillet* are still occasionally erected; that the “*littérature du boudoir*” passes for erudition; and that criticisms on the humour of Moliere, or the genius of Racine, are repeated, after the decisions of the literary tribunals of Louis XIV, with all the air of their original freshness. Here the encyclo-

---

depend upon it, the rock on which we shall split will be vanity. All want to command, and none will obey. *En attendant*, our disputes and contentions are, *un délice pour les jacobins.*”

pædists are still anathematized *en masse*; the Turgots and the Neckers are accused of founding the revolution; Voltaire is placed under the ban of orthodox opinion, and Rousseau condemned for his dangerous republicanism; in spite of that sentimental rhetoric, which is more than ever the jargon of their class. Here Corneille is *baroque*, Beaumarchais *mauvais ton*, and Mad. de Stael a *phrasière*; while Mirabeau, Condorcet, and Champfort, condemned equally for their eloquence, their wit, and their philosophy, are consigned to ignominious celebrity, as *des jacobins scélérats*.

In these circles the veteran *voltigeur* recurs to the “*campagnes à la rose*” of Louis XV. and “fights all his battles o’er again,” in the salon of his ancient mistress; the *ami de la maison*, grown grey in his chains, recalls the morals of the same times; and wields the fan, and hovers near the *bergère* of his liege-lady, with a decent observance of all the rules of established *bienséance*; while many a *ci-devant jeune homme* indulges in a certain tone of licensed pleasantry, *tant soit peu libre*, which denotes him, though now “meagre and very rueful in his looks,” to have once shone



in the galaxy of fashion, a “*charmant polisson*,” or an “*aimable roué*,” the Pomenars, or the Richelieu of other days.

In the salons of this party anecdotes of royal sentiment, and specimens of royal wit, circulate in endless repetition. Here “*l'esprit de Henri IV.*” is revived; “*les sentimens nobles*” of Louis the Great added to the collection of royal *anas*, and the whole compendium of *bons-mots* of the reigning family re-echoed with increasing admiration. Here the king is made to utter “*le mot, qui part du cœur* ;” Monsieur to express himself with that “*tournure charmante qui lui convient* ;” here the unrivalled courage of Mons. d'Angouleme is eternally set off by his repartee, of “*mon ami, j'ai la vue basse* ;”\*---and the Duc de Berri, who affords no *prise* in wit or sentiment for loyal admiration, is extolled for a *brusquerie*, that recalls the charming frankness of the founder of his family ; and “being little blessed with the set phrase of peace,” is usually mentioned as a martial prince, bred in camps, and endowed with a certain degree

---

\* Made in reply to a remark that he exposed his person too much, during a reconnoissance.

of *esprit de garnison, qui lui sied à merveille.*" Terms hyperbolically ardent are applied to every member of the royal family: "*les princes chéris*" are adored by the *ultras*, and the "*roi paternel*" is "*idolâtré*," by all the *modérés*. With the sentiments and intellectual condition of the nation, both parties are equally unacquainted; and the population of the land is again divided into the *menu peuple*, and the *gens comme il faut*."

Among those of the elder royalists attached to the person of the king, and believing that they contributed to his restoration, there is a sort of lifeless animation, resembling the organic movements, which survive the extinction of animal life, and which are evidenced in the hopping of a bird after decapitation. I have frequently amused myself by following the groupings of these loyal *vieilleries*; who, like old Mercier, seem to continue living on merely "*par curiosité pour voir ce que cela deviendra.*"---I was one morning present at a *rencontre* between two "*vol-tigeurs\* de Louis XIV.*" on the terrace of

---

\* The name given in derision to old military men, re-established in all the rank and privileges they enjoyed before the revolution.

*Additional Note.* The Quarterly Review, in the face of

the Tuileries. They were distinguished by the most dramatic features of their class; ---the one was in his court dress, (for it was a levee day,) and with his *chapeau de bras* in one hand, and his snuff-box in the other, he exhibited a costume, on which perhaps the bright eyes of a Pompadour had often rested: the other was *en habit militaire*; and might have been a spruce ensign, “*joli comme un cœur*,” at the battle of Fontenoy. Both were covered with crosses and ribbons; and they moved along under the trees, that had shaded their youthful *gaillardise*, with the conscious triumph of Moorish chiefs, restored to their promised Alhambra. Their telegraphic glasses communicated their mutual approach; and advancing *chapeau bas*, and shaking the powder from their *ailes de pigeon*, through a series of profound bows, they took their seat on the bench, which I occupied, and began “*les nouvelles à la main*,” to discuss the business of the day.

A lever, a review, a procession, and the installation of the king's bust, which in some remote town had been received with cries of

---

this note, has descended to the meanness of misrepresentation. It accuses the author of asserting her acquaintance with these voltigeurs, the cotemporaries of Louis XIV.

“*Vive le roi, mille fois répétés,*” were the subjects, which led to a boundless eulogium on the royal family. The speeches made by the king and the Duc de Berri to Count Lynch were themes of extravagant admiration.---“*Ah, mon Dieu, oui,*” (said the courtier) “*voilà bien nos princes! Et l’usurpateur, monsieur le général! a-t-il jamais parlé de la sorte?*”---“*Comment donc, Monsieur le baron! vous nous parlez du tyran? C’étoit un bourgeois de la rue St. Denis, dans toutes les façons; Monsieur le baron, croyez bien que, si les jours du meilleur des rois étaient menacés, nous lui ferions, tous un rempart de nos corps; là.*”

“*Monsieur le général,*” (exclaimed the baron, placing his little hat on three hairs of his toupet) “*on n’a pas besoin d’être militaire, pour penser ainsi.*” Both now arose, in the exaltation of the moment; the one shuffling towards the palace, the other hobbling to the *corps de garde* of the Cent Suisses.\*

---

\* Instances of this sort of *resurrection* are by no means uncommon; the veteran royalists abound, in a proportion perfectly incomprehensible. I myself knew a gentleman, who *fell* on the plains of Quiberon, and who had no rea-

References to the *tyrant* and to the *usurper* are constantly made by the courtiers of Louis XVIII. and even his usurpation seems to be not more an object of execration, than his inability to “*représenter noblement.*” The enthusiasm which always displayed itself in Paris, when he appeared in public, is now ascribed to the police; and the homage offered to the king, in the garden of the Tuileries, is obstinately believed to be the unpurchased effusions of that loyalty, “*qui part du cœur:*” for the term “*cœur*” has become a distinguished

---

son to suppose himself alive for some hours. Left for dead on the field, but only severely wounded, he seized a favourable moment for resuscitation; assumed the uniform, arms, and credentials of a deceased republican soldier, who lay by his side; and after serving some time as a fifer, contrived to make his escape, and lives to tell the story. Many others too, since the restoration, seem to have returned from that “*bourne,*” whence, it is vulgarly supposed, “no traveller returns.” An “*élève de St. Cyr,*” keeps a “*pension,*” or boarding-school, for young ladies in the fauxbourg St. Germain; the *coëffeur* of Marie Antoinette affixes this distinction on a placard which promises “*des nouveautés en tout genre,*” and Mons. de B. master of the ceremonies to Louis XV. presides over the steps and motions of the reigning beauties, after having directed those of their grandmothers.

article in the vocabulary of the French court; and it is held in equal estimation with "*les graces et les amours*," and the other mythological emigrants, who have returned with the rest of the "ancient regime."

I was one evening waiting in the anti-room of the Dutchess d'Angouleme, until my turn came for the honour of a presentation to her royal highness, when the Princess de la T----, who stood near me, was called by one of the ladies in waiting, to look at a group, dancing under the windows of the apartment. This circle, which was performing *la ronde*, to the air of "*gai, gai, marions-nous*," sung by themselves, was composed of a few soldiers, and some women of no very equivocal appearance; while the feeble cries of "*vive le roi*," so often heard from childish voices, were rarely strengthened by deeper tones of loyal exclamation. To the *dame d'honneur*; however, all this appeared a rapturous symptom of universal loyalty; such as never had been witnessed in the best days of royal France. "*Voyez donc princesse*," (she observed to Mad. de la T.) "*quelle allégresse du cœur! voilà la franche loyauté de nos bons vieux-tems! A-t-on jamais*

*vu une pareille joie pendant l'usurpation du tyran ?*

There appears, indeed, among these ardent royalists a resolute determination to see every object, through the medium of their wishes. It is vain to talk to them of the past, or to lead them to the future; they exist but for the present, in the persuasion, that change can never come; almost forgetting that it ever did occur; and believing that the *beau siècle de Louis XIV.* is about to be restored in all its splendour, and extent of despotism. Every thing that is said, or done, by every member of the royal family, is repeated with interest, and detailed with delight; and if the infirmities of the monarch allowed him the innocent amusement, of pulling the chairs from under the ladies of the court, like his great predecessor, there would be scarcely one amongst them who would not canvas the distinction of a *culbute*, like the former subservient Dutchesses of Versailles.

Having been separated from my party, at court, on the night of the *grand couvert*, held in honour of the Duc de Berri's marriage, I found myself seated amidst a little group of

“*royalistes purs*,” who were commenting on the gastronomic talent displayed by his Majesty, and who seemed to consider his powers of mastication and of deglutition as among the virtues of his character, and the charms of his person. “*Voyez, donc*,” said an old lady in an head-dress *à la Maintenon*, to a knight of *St. Louis*, decorated with a badge of his order, “*Voyez notre bon roi, il mange comme quatre, le roi ! Mais c’est un appétit charmant, charmant ! !*” “*Eh, pourquoi non ?*” demanded the chevalier. “*Il est d’une vigueur, le roi ; mais d’une vigueur extraordinaire.*” “*Et Madame d’Angoulême*,” added the lady, “*comme elle est embellie ce soir ? et sa Majesté, qu’il a l’air d’un père de famille !*”

“*Enfin, madame*,” interrupted the chevalier, offering his snuff-box, whose lid represented the whole house of Bourbon, *en papier mâché*. “*Enfin, madame, c’est un beau tableau de famille, que voila !*”\*

Personal devotion to the king is not however exclusively confined to the elders of the

---

\*I literally copy the jargon of loyalty as I took it down, *de vive voix*, in my journal.



privileged classes. It was a profane maxim of a profane French wit, that “ *les vieilles et les laides sont toujours pour Dieu ;*” and his present Majesty of France seems to enjoy a similar devotion, as part of his divine right. Many of the aged members, of the middle classes of the capital, have remained true to the good old cause. The *petits rentiers*, or stockholders of the fauxbourg St. Germaine (that centre of all antiquity and royalism), assemble morning and evening before the windows of the Tuileries, in the hope of seeing the king pass and repass to and from his morning’s drive ; and they remain seated on the benches, which front the façade of the palace, among piping fawns, and fighting gladiators. These monumental figures contrast themselves, with peculiar force, to the marble wonders of the chisel which surround them ; and to the flitting groups of the present age, which glide by, turning on them looks of the saine pleased curiosity, as I have seen bestowed on the *monumens François*, at *les petits Augustins*. Here the costumes of the three reigns which preceded the revolution, are preserved and amicably united. Here is still to be seen the “ *hurlu-brélu*”

head-dress, the subject of so many of Mad. de Sevigné's pleasant letters. Here too may be found the *bonnets à papillons pointés*, and *petites comètes* of the du Deffands and Geoffrins; with the *fichus de soufflet*, and the more modern *négligé* of the Polignacs and Lamballés. These venerable votaries of loyalty, who have so long "owed heaven a death," that they seem to have been forgotten by their creditor, are chiefly females. They are always accompanied by a *cortége* of little dogs, which, half-shorn, and half-fed, fastened to girdles, no longer *the gift of the graces*, by ribbons no longer "*couleur de rose*," are under the jurisdiction of large fans, frequently extended to correct the "*petites folies*" of these *Sylphides* and *Fidèles*, when they sport round their ancient mistresses, with unbecoming levity.

The daily course of patience, to which these veteran dames submit, is relieved by the employments of knitting and netting; and by a *causerie* in all the set phrase and jargon of better times. The speculations are endless, whether the king will, or will not drive out; and the most ingenious anagrams are discovered in those portentous words,

“ *Buonaparte*” and *Révolution*,” which predicted the downfall of the one, and the extinction of the other.\*

At the apparition of the king, passing the balcony surrounded by his guards (for every room in the palace exhibits soldiers in the windows), dogs, fans, and anagrams are all instantly forgotten. A host of *ci-devant white* handkerchiefs wave in the air; and “ *vive le roi*” is “ *mille fois répété*,” in sounds that scarcely reach the gracious ear, for which they are intended.

These phalanxes of antiquarian loyalty, male and female, were however daily thinning, when I left France; from the total inability of the “best of kings” to provide for his venerable adherents, in a manner suitable to their spirited ambition and sanguine hopes. All who can furbish up an old claim to the distinction of a *gentil-homme né*, call for restitution of lands, rights, and privileges; and though they, many of them, return to their country, at the end of twenty-five years,

---

\* “ *La France veut son roi*, and “ *un Corse la finira*,” are prophecies detected by loyal anagrammatists, in the words “ *Révolution Française*.”

neither more indigent nor more insignificant than when they left it, they raise the outcry against royal ingratitude, mount a *croix de St. Louis*, talk most pathetically of the ancient splendor of their *château*, and their *terres*, and exclaim against the impolicy of the king, in neglecting his *fidèle noblesse*, who would alone form a fence round his throne!!---such a fence, as they formed round the throne of his unfortunate brother!

These ancient "*gentils-hommes nés*, a source of annoyance to the king and to his ministers, afford endless subject of amusement to the "naughty children of the revolution;" who are foolish enough to risk their safety, or their interests, for a joke. The young, gallant, and handsome Count de L——, grandson of Mad. de Genlis, lost his promotion in the army, from his too close and admirable representation of one of these "*fiers marquis*."

"The very head and front of his offence was this,  
No more."\*

---

\* The young Comte de L—— presented himself, in the full *costume* of Louis XIV. at a fashionable *café*, where a number of his brother officers were assembled. Passing for *un ancien général*, he expressed himself with great

While the young *étourdis* thus occasionally amuse themselves with these dangerous imitations, the professed wits of the capital, who have not yet enlisted in the service of the Apollo and the Muses of the royal Pantheon, produce daily some squib against the

---

violence against the present state of military tactics; and without being discovered, excited much entertainment in his unsuspecting comrades. Triumphant with the success of his dramatic representation, he finished his evening by walking in the gardens of the Tuileries. The next day, when he presented himself at the levee of the minister, to obtain his promised colonelcy of the — regiment, he was informed that his Majesty had withdrawn his consent to that arrangement. Mon. L—— received this disappointment with great resignation and cheerfulness, and passing from the portals of the palace to the terrace of the Tuileries, he suddenly met the very type and model of the character he had represented the night before, in the figure of an old “*voltigeur*,” with a *coëffure*, à *l’oiseau royal*, and all the *insignia* of his order. Without knowing him, he immediately counselled him to retire, and change his dress, if he did not wish to excite the resentment of the king; “for, monsieur,” he added, “only from my adopting the *costume*, which becomes you so well, I have just lost the colonelcy of the — regiment.” “The true Simon Pure,” equally overwhelmed with gratitude and consternation, assured Mons. L—— he would immediately profit by his kind advice; having hitherto retained the dress he had worn in the court of Louis XV. as that most gracious to the eyes of his illustrious descendant.

ex-gentility of France. From these I select the following *chanson*, as being the most recent, rather than the most bitter, philippic against the venerable *order of the resurrection*.

## LE MARQUIS DE CARABAS.

Air.—*Le grand Roi Dagobert.*

Voyez ce fier Marquis,  
Nous traitant en peuple conquis,  
Son coursier décharné,  
De loin, chez nous l'a ramené.  
Vers son vieux castel  
Ce noble mortel  
Marche, en brandissant  
Un sabre innocent.  
Chapeau bas, chapeau bas.  
Gloire au Marquis de Carabas !

Aumôniers, Châtelains,  
Vassaux, vavasseurs, et villains,  
C'est moi, (dit-il) c'est moi,  
Qui *seul* a rétabli mon roi.  
Mais s'il ne me rend  
Les droits de mon rang ;  
Avec moi, corbleu !  
Il verra beau jeu.  
Chapeau bas, &c. &c.

Vivons donc en repos ;  
Mais l'on m'ose parler d'impôts.

A l'état, pour son bien,  
Un gentil-homme ne doit rien.  
Grace à mes créneaux,  
A mes arsenaux,  
Je puis au préfet  
Dire un peu son fait.  
Chapeau bas, &c. &c.

Pour nous calomnier,  
Bien qu'on aît voulu le nier,  
Ma famille eut pour chef,  
Un des fils de *Pépin le bref*.  
D'après mon blason,  
Je vois ma maison  
Plus noble, ma foi,  
Que celle du roi !  
Chapeau bas, &c. &c.

Qui me résisteroit ?  
La marquise a le tabouret.  
Pour être évêque, un jour,  
Mon dernier fils suivra la cour ;  
Mon fils, le baron,  
(Quoiqu'un peu poltron,)   
Veut avoir des croix,  
Il en aura trois.  
Chapeau bas, &c. &c.

Prêtres, que nous vengeons,  
Levez la dîme, et partageons.  
Et toi, *peuple animal*,  
Porte encore le bât féodal.

Seuls nous chasserons,  
Et tous vos tendrons  
Subiront l'honneur,  
Du droit du seigneur.  
Chapeau bas, &c. &c.

Curé, fais ton devoir,  
Remplis pour nous ton encensoir.  
Vous, pages, et valets,  
Guerre aux villains, et rosscz-les.  
Que de mes ayeux  
Les droits glorieux  
Passent tout entiers,  
A mes héritiers.  
Chapeau bas, &c. &c.

A few years back, all ranks and distinctions were lost in the affectedly simple appellations of *citoyen* and *citoyenne*. At present France is inundated with titles, multiplied far beyond the heraldic dignities of those aristocratical days; when, according to Smollet, “Mons. le Comte” called to his son, in the business of their noble *verger*, “*Mons. le Marquis, avez-vous donné à manger aux cochons?*” Every body now, who affects loyalty to the reigning dynasty, professes it under the sanction of a title; and I observed that both the superior and inferior orders of society gave a peculiar



emphasis to every revived mark of nobility. Even the valet de chambre, as he flung open the folding doors, *les grands battans*, of the salon, vociferated the names of the successive guests, with a marked and cadenced pronunciation, of madame-la-baronne, madame-la-comtesse, monsieur le duc, and monsieur le vicomte! Meantime the legitimate, or pretended, owners of these titles appear to be wrapt in ecstasy over the long-forgotten distinctions, which, at all times, unaccompanied by legislative functions or political influence, are now but seldom backed by that opulence, which is in itself a rank; and they are indeed

———“ full of sound,  
Signifying nothing.”

By a singular contradiction, however, rank, of even the highest order, takes no precedence in private society. Even among the old noblesse, there is a sort of *pêle-mêle* confusion in the ingress and egress from assemblies, dinner-parties, and *soirées*, which no one endeavours to arrange, by either giving or taking the *pas*. Speaking on this subject to one, who speaks well upon all, with whom

it is always instruction to converse, and to whom it is delightful to listen, the Comtesse Pastoret, she observed: "It is high birth rather than high rank that is estimated in France; but neither are marked in private society by those minute forms of precedence, to which you free-born republican English pay such minute observance. At court, our dukes have their place, and our dutchesses their *tabourets*; but in the salon, if any distinction is made, it is in favour of genius, celebrity, or age; while to be a stranger, is an *état* in itself."

Rank is very ill defined in France, even by the most strenuous advocates for its privileges. I was informed that a baron is sometimes more noble than a duke; and on my asking a royalist, whether Mons. D---- was a "*gentil-homme né?*" he replied, "No: he is *d'une naissance noble*, but he is not *gentil-homme*." I asked what constitutes that rank in the state; and he made me this singular reply: "*the privilege of going in the king's coach*." Thus the rank, which in England gives its possessor a seat in the senate, in France may not entitle him to "*a seat in the king's coach*." What must have been the

genius of the old government, when the energy and spirit of the nobility were broken down to such distinctions as these! To be permitted to accompany *Louis le Grand*, in his drives from Versailles to Marli, and from Marli to Versailles, (the great occupation of his life) was an honour of which all his nobles were proudly ambitious; and Madame de Sevigné describes one of these royal *promenades en voiture*, in a manner that gives a fair picture of the morals, and spirit of the times. The king went first, in a *calèche* with his *mistress*, her sister, and brothers; the noble Mortemarts and Thianges! then followed the queen and princesses, legitimate and illegitimate.\*

However striking these evidences of social degradation may be, to the eye of moral and political philosophy, to the glance of the genuine French royalist they are not perceptible; or, if observed, are but considered as trifling “*égaremens du cœur et de l’esprit*” in the royal legislators, who at once modelled

---

\* The Princesse de Conti was the natural daughter of the king, by Mad. de la Valière, and was always of these parties.

and executed their own system of government. On this subject they will hear no reasoning: unable to deny, what it is impossible to defend, they cut short all argument with, “ *cependant je voudrois que tout cela fût, comme dans le bon vieux tems.*”

A very clever and intimate friend of mine at Paris, with considerable talent and some wit, had gotten deeply entangled with the *royalistes enragés*; and was herself indeed *enragée*, to a point that was sometimes extremely amusing. We were chatting one morning, when a royalist acquaintance joined us, and mentioned an ordinance of the king's, which directed the formation of a new military school, after the model of that instituted in 1750, for the education of the young nobility. I could not help remarking, that I doubted whether this new school, upon old rules, would assimilate in its systems, with the tactics of the military and polytechnic seminaries, formed during the revolution. My little *enragée* flew into a paroxysm of loyal indignation, and interrupted me with; “ don't talk to me of the polytechnic schools,

those hot-beds of *jacobinisme* and *brigandage*.<sup>\*</sup> It is our wish (*nous autres*) that the rising generation should be shut up, and educated in a profound ignorance of all that has happened for these last thirty years; and that on coming forth into the world, they might find every thing *in statu quo*, as it was in the “*beau siècle de Louis XIV.*”

“And the Bastille?” I asked.

“*Eh, mais oui, ma chère; et la Bastille aussi.*”

The Bastille, she added, was a sort of *maison de plaisance*, when men of rank were sent to it, for having incurred the displeasure of the king; as in the instance of the Duke de Richelieu, who was visited there by all the beautiful princesses of that day, who were desperately in love with him. For the

---

\* The *élèves* of the *école militaire* of Metz received the Duke de Berri, with their arms crossed, in consequence of some observations falling from his royal highness, signifying that he deemed these military schools little better than nests of *jacobinisme* and *brigandage*.

On his enquiring, in a rather rough manner, what was to be learned in these seminaries? the chief master replied: “*Mon Prince, c'est une école, où on apprend à mourir pour sa patrie.*”

*lie du peuple*, it was, if any thing, too stately and too noble a place of confinement; and as for the *iron cages* and *subterraneous dungeons*, they were only for state criminals, who spoke against the king and his government---“*et tout cela, c'étoit très juste.*”

When I insisted on the facility with which a *lettre de cachet* might be procured, to shut up such *suspected* criminals, before any form of justice had pronounced them guilty, she shrugged her shoulders and replied; “*Pour les lettres de cachet, on en peut dire autant de bien que de mal! Tenez, ma chère! Suppose I had a brother whose conduct disgraced our family; would you have us expose his shame, and throw an odium on our house, by suffering him to come into a court of justice? No, there was a time, when, under such circumstances, the honour and dignity of a noble family was saved; and a lettre de cachet got rid of the mauvais sujet, and buried together the criminal and the crime.---Eh bien, il faut toujours espérer que le bon tems reviendra! !*”

I quote these sentiments, uttered by a woman of rank, talent, and education, as being (I believe very generally) those of the party to which she belonged.

While the royalists or personal adherents to the representative of the Capets take for their device the well-known cry of Vendean loyalty, “*vive le roi, quand même,*” and display upon all occasions sentiments worthy of this head-long devotion; the *ultras* are by no means equally unreserved in their principles of attachment to the person and measures of the king. Louis XVIII. is treated by them as “a good easy man,” whose moderation is weakness; who, unnecessarily false, and injudiciously arbitrary, excludes from power those, who are most capable of exercising it; and merely contents himself with chopping off a few hands and heads; when hecatombs should bleed, to appease the spirit of unglutted vengeance; and to clear the kingdom of such persons and principles, as he now suffers to share his counsels, and dictate his ordinances.

Upon one occasion, an *ultra*, speaking of the king in terms of reprobation, that amounted nearly to accusing his most Christian Majesty of jacobinism and infidelity, I could not help asking him; “*le roi donc, est-il royaliste?*” “*Voilà, madame, ce dont nous doutons,*” was the reply.

In another instance, I was driving through

the Bois de Boulogne, with a lady of the same political sentiments, when the desolated state of that once beautiful spot called forth her lamentations and reproaches. Addressing me in a tone of complaint, as though it had been I who had carried off "*Birnam wood to Dunsinane*," she exclaimed, "*Voilà, madame, voilà l'ouvrage de vous autres Anglais.*" I could not help feeling piqued at her ingratitude for the services, which, at least, had been rendered to her party; and I answered, "*Eh bien, madame, vous avez un roi, en échange de votre bois.*" She shrugged her shoulders, shook her head, and raised her eye-brows; and replied, in a broken sentence, "*pour cela, ma chère dame---eh! eh! que voulez-vous?*" as if not quite satisfied with the equivalent.

I observed indeed upon all occasions, that both royalists and *ultras* showed a perfect insensibility to the services rendered them by the allies in general, and by the English in particular. I remember walking with a party of *ultras* near the spot, where Prince Blucher fell from his horse; when an Englishman of the party observed that it was there, where the prince had broken some bone; and an *ultra* replied, *à part*, "If it had



been his neck, it would have been no great matter."

It is strange that even the Buonapartists and constitutionalists, though protesting against the policy and falsehood of the English government, express themselves more favourably towards the nation, than the royalists; who, though pleased with the restoration, cannot altogether brook the discreditable manner of their return; nor cease to feel that they have been *too much obliged*. It is certain, moreover, that the moral and political feelings of the constitutionalists assimilate more closely with those maintained in England, than the notions of the advocates of the *old regime* in France; who assert unceasingly, that the *anglo-mania* which prevailed immediately before the revolution, was among the leading causes of that event; and that Voltaire's letters on England were for his country the most pernicious work he ever wrote.\*

---

\* They accuse England of all their misfortunes; of originating the revolution; of sending the emigrants to be slaughtered at Quiberon; and of letting Buonaparte escape from Elba. Even still they consider the ex-emperor as a sort of *bag-fox*, to be let loose, whenever the English ministry may be inclined to *show sport* to Europe.

The gradual alteration in tone and manner of the *ultra* circles, during my residence at Paris, was extremely obvious; and to an uninterested observer very amusing. They no longer seemed bound to “hint a fault, and hesitate dislike” to the measures of the government; but ventured, even in certain traits of amiable weakness discoverable in the character of his Majesty, to find subjects of pleasantry and sources of censure. Their once loud vociferations, in favour of the *divine right* of kings to be absurd without ridicule, and arbitrary without blame, appeared now utterly forgotten or wholly recanted.

The Buonapartist-ministry, as they term it, is treated with avowed contempt; the measures of the court publicly reprobated; and even the private friendships and tender predilections of the king receive but little quarter. The respect paid to *le Père la Chaise*, by the courtiers of Louis XIV. is denied, by their descendants, to the *Père Elysée* of Louis XVIII. And those noble dames,\* whose great-grandmothers canvassed

---

\* “Toutes les dames de la Reine font la compagnie de Madame de Montespan; on y joue tour à tour; rien n’est caché, rien n’est secret.” *Lettres de Sévigné*, vol. iii.

a look from the mistress of that king, and were the associates of all her dissipated orgies, refuse their countenance to the innocent and platonic preference of the reigning sovereign. The *ultra* ladies openly exclaim against the degradation of a place, once so nobly filled, but now occupied by a "*petite maîtresse de province*." Although it is understood, that Mad. de P---- holds her captive only by the delicate chains of mind, yet this spiritual communion is ridiculed; and the *roturière Agnes Sorel* falls within the general maxim of the class, as to her intellectual charms,

"Nul n'aura de l'esprit, hors nous, et nos amis."\*

But while the king remains firm and true to his sentiments and attachments, no ties less pure disturb the moral propriety of his

---

\* A particular friend of Mad. P——, in defending her from these malicious imputations, said to me, "As to the king's visits to Mad. P——, it is not possible. He could not enter the door of her little apartment; and such is her timidity, that when he addresses her at court, "*le rouge lui tombe de la joue*." Perfectly convinced myself of the innocence of the parties, I submit these proofs to the consideration of ultra-scepticism.

court; and the royal family, it is observed, exhibit “*un sublime et touchant tableau de toutes les vertus publiques et privées.*”<sup>\*</sup> No Mad. Dubarry now usurps a place “behind the throne, greater than the throne.” Even bishops, who have long lived in holy wedlock with their revolutionary wives, have discarded them;† and laymen, who for many years have been separated from their *chères moitiés*, have been obliged to take them back.‡ All “*liaisons dangereuses*” are banished from a court, where piety and politics have usurped the place of gallantry and the graces; as *les petits ramoneurs* once showed their sooty faces on the fans of French belles, instead of “*the loves*,” whom they had dethroned.

While, however, these two factions are engaged in frivolous discussions and puerile

\* See *Annales Politiques*, August 19, 1816.

† When Mad. Talleyrand returned to France, to enforce the fulfilment of the conditions, which induced her to submit to a separation from her right reverend lord, the king was graciously pleased to be jocular on the occasion with his *grand chambellan*. “*Oui, Stre,*” replied Mons. T. “*son retour est pour moi un vingt de Mars.*”—(The day of Napoleon’s return to Elba.)

‡ Mons. Chateaubriand is said to be among the number of these “*martyrs.*”

contests, in which their own interests and their own vanities alone hold any concern, the rest of the nation beholds in indignant silence their usurpation of all places of honour, emolument, and importance. The ancient noblesse alone, are sent into foreign countries, to represent the land they have so long abandoned, and with whose existing principles and character their own can never assimilate. The adherents of the *old régime*, command in the army, and lead in the senate; and those, who for twenty-five years have been *armed against France*, now decide her fate, and rule over her vigorous population, upon principles and systems, whose abolition she had purchased with her blood, through a long and painful term of suffering, of conflict, and of misery.

---

The society of Paris, after the second restoration of the Bourbons, appearing half in *shade* and half in *relief*, is not inaptly imaged by that condition of the moon, in which, although her whole orb be visible, the effulgence of her light proceeds only from a part. While the *royaliste pur* and the *royaliste ex-*

*agéré* buz, and bustle, and flutter on the scene, warmed into animation by the rays of princely protection, or of royal favour; all who cannot claim these distinguishing epithets, "preserve the noiseless tenor of their way," and (to borrow a phrase of Cowley) "lead a life, as it were, by stealth."

This unclassed, but suspected order, generally under the *surveillance* of the police, and often little better than prisoners to their own porters and valets, have, by some fatal experiences, been broken into circumspection; and, in general society, are cautious not to risk opinions, which might unavailingly incur the penalty of exile, or perhaps of death. A certain tone of pleasant *équivoque*, however, pervades their conversation; an ambushed raillery, which well supplies the place of bitter invective, or of whining complaint. How often, and how willingly, have I hastened to one of their "*petits comités sous la rose*," from some catacomb circle, where each monumental member spoke in his turn, or was called to order, if he infringed on the prescribed *regularity* of the conversation!---With what pleasure have I flown to some forbidden ground, where, in

the hallowed circle of amity and confidence, wit and *genius* exercised their proscribed witcheries;\* where talents, which were even then, under various forms, delighting the world, and pursuing their golden course to immortality, reserved some of their brightest beams to illumine the passing moments of private intercourse; and where names were re-echoed, destined to live for ever, and already traced in the luminous rolls of splendid celebrity! This, indeed, was a society,

---

\* "The world," said one of the most celebrated men of Europe, "is divided into *five* parts; the four *old* quarters, and *les gens d'esprit*; and this *fifth* division is now placed on the list of proscription." "Who is that person?" asked the Duc de D——s, pointing out a gentleman who had excited his attention by observations, *somewhat bold*, on a political subject of conversation. "*C'est un homme d'esprit*," was the reply. "*Bon*," added the duc. "*Je vois bien qu'il n'est pas des nôtres.*"

It is to the father of this nobleman, that the following anecdote is attributed. Being appointed to direct the festivities for the marriage of the Count d'Artois, it was suggested to him, that an epithalamium was indispensable; and a person was recommended, to *perform the job*. Upon his consenting to this arrangement, the poet waited upon him for his directions, in what manner it should be *got up*. "*Ma foi*," he replied, "*je n'en sais rien: qu'il soit de velours vert, brode d'or, comme les autres meubles!*"

often “dream’d of in my philosophy,” but never counted upon in my expectations. These were hours over which weariness held no jurisdiction; and every sand in the glass turned to gold, as it fell.

The society of Paris, taken as a whole, and including all parties and factions, is infinitely superior in point of taste, acquirement, and courtesy, to that of the capital of any other nation. Paris, the elysium of men of letters, has always been the resort of foreigners of literary, scientific, and political eminence; and princes and potentates, who have influenced the destinies of nations, are seen mingling in her circles with the more valuable characters of Europe; whose works and names are destined to reach posterity, when titles of higher sound shall be forgotten. The Humbolts, the Playfairs, the Davys, the Castis, the Canovas, now succeed, in the Parisian salons, to the Sternes, the Humes, the Walpoles, and Algarottis of other times. The talent for conversation so conspicuous in France among all classes, originating, perhaps, in the rapidity of perception and facility of combination of the people, was early perfected, by institutes,



which, prohibiting an interference in matters of government, determined the powers of national intellect to subjects of social discussion, and tasteful analysis

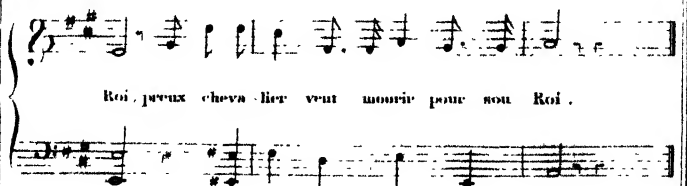
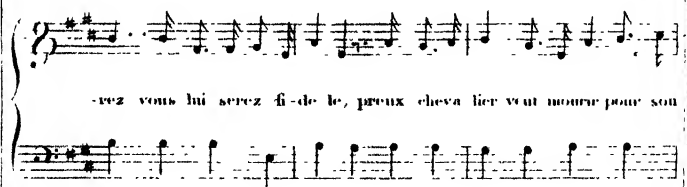
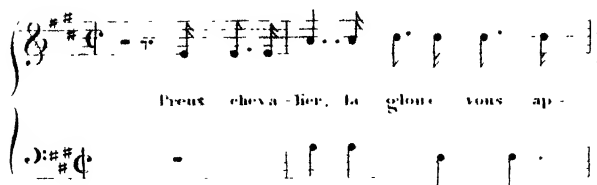
In the days of the beautiful and unfortunate Marie Antoinette, the splendid court which surrounded her, opposing itself to the *philosophers*, who brought strength and energy into fashion, reduced the whole vocabulary of *bon-ton*, as an elegant courtier of that day assured me, to about twenty or thirty words; and whoever presumed to exceed the stated boundary, was stigmatised as a *bel esprit* and a *philosophe*. The revolution has added much to the strength of conversation, without having sacrificed either precision or *finesse*; and “*bien causer*,” to be a *bon raconteur*,” is as sure a passport to the best society at this moment, as it was in the days of Louis XV.

La Marquise de V----, enumerating one day the celebrated persons who formed her *soirées*, before the revolution, dwelt with many touches of pathos upon Champfort, who had been amongst the number; and she concluded, in a tone of great emotion, “*Ah, madame, j’ai perdu en lui mon meil-*



# PREUX CHEVALIER.

*By Mad. Louise de Beaucourt*



# ÇA N'TIENDRA PAS.

Allegro

Comme il faut prendre en phé les ac

Edens, fâcheux et bons, dâ sup por-te le cat a-strophe qui nous ra

me-na les. Pour-bons, Pour me trou-ver sur leur pas-sag e j'ai mem e

fait deux ou trois pas, mais je me suis dû côté dom mage, ça n'tiendra,

pas, ça n'tiendra pas, mais je me suis dû côté dom mage, ça n'tiendra

pas ça n'tiendra pas.



*leur---*” She paused for an instant, and I was about to fill up the break, which feeling had made, with the word “*ami* ;” but she repeated, “*J’ai perdu en lui mon meilleur causeur !*”

Excellent *raconteurs* are to be met with in every society of Paris ; and I have listened with wonder and admiration to the humour, facility, and point, with which tale after tale has been delivered, anecdotes related, and stories invented, for the amusement of a circle ; where every member bore his part, where all played in their turn a willing audience, and all were equal to an amusing exhibition. That “melancholy and gentlemanlike” pleasantry, produced in English society under the name of *quizzing*, is a sort of “*maudlin mirth*” unknown in the circles of Paris ; while ridicule, always dreaded, and ably wielded, falls almost exclusively upon *unfounded* pretension. Taste, as referable to the ordinances of society, is here so deeply studied, so well defined in her rules, and so thoroughly understood in her principles, that the decisions of temporary modes have but little influence on opinion. As far as I could observe, although a certain light

*persiflage* was much the fashion, nothing *was* ridiculed, but what *was strictly ridiculous*.

The mind, thus permitted to take its utmost stretch, is neither restrained by fashion, nor clouded by *cnnui*; and a licensed discussion of all subjects is granted to those, who are known to be wearisome upon none. Admiration for talent is indeed as universal, as is the intelligence which appreciates it. Not a ray falls unreflected; not a point drops unfelt; all is *rebound* and elasticity. The society, like the climate, is bright and genial; and it is the peculiar and united influence of both, to set the mind and the blood into rapid circulation; to lighten humanity of half the ills of its inheritance; to enhance its pleasures, and multiply its enjoyments.

But while private society still preserves its delightful character, the existing order of things occasionally interferes with its recreations; and the vigilant police sometimes obtrudes itself on the pleasures, even of those who have nothing to dread from its discoveries. Leaving, at a late hour, an elegant and brilliant circle, in the *Rue Ville L'évêque*, in the fresh impression of my admi-

ration, I was lamenting that all my hours were not so passed; that a short time would convey me far from the scene of such enjoyment; when a number of soldiers, rushing from beneath the shade of a high wall, surrounded the carriage, and seized the reins. Bastilles, *lettres de cachet*, mysterious arrestations, and solitary confinements, started upon my scared imagination, and I had already classed myself with the iron masque, and caged Mazarine; with the Wilsons, Hutchinsons, and Bruces, as I rapidly went over my possible peccadillos of *lèse-majesté*; when the leader of the military vociferated, “*Qui sont ces Messieurs?*” and ordered the windows of the carriage to be let down. Our French servant, who was probably himself one of the police, immediately entered upon the defensive, and declared that we were English persons returning to their hotel, from the Marquis de C----’s; adding significantly: “*vous vous trompez, mes amis.*” After a little muttering among the party, they drew back to their station under the wall, and we passed on, with feelings similar to those of the country mouse; for though I acknowledged that



“ my lord alone knew how to live,” still I could not help exclaiming,

“ Give me again my hollow tree,  
“ My crust of bread—and liberty.”

As we drove on, I observed a fiacre pass us, and looking out of the window, perceived that it was stopped and surrounded, as we had been. The next morning we learned that the police had been in search of suspected persons,\* and our servant suggested that they were most likely concealed in the quarter where we had visited ; “ for it is in the Rue d’Anjou (he added) that *the two Queens live.*”†

Amidst all the suspicion and distrust, which the weakness and vigilant jealousy of the present government are so well calculated to excite in private society, each particular circle yields itself up to a freedom of discussion, which an entire confidence in the honour

---

\* We have occasionally seen the houses of suspected persons guarded by soldiers, while the unfortunate inmates were undergoing a scrutiny.

† The Ex-Queen of Spain and her sister, who is queen of—I forget what.

of its members can alone explain, or justify. The royalists abuse the *ultras* ; the *ultras* abuse the government ; the constitutionalists laugh at both, and just stopping short of treason, exercise their wit and their satire against the dominant parties, in songs, epigrams, anecdotes, and *bon-mots*.

It has frequently occurred to me to have witnessed the most opposite discussions, and listened to the most contradictory opinions, in the course of the same evening ; *assisting* at a *royalist* dinner, drinking *ultra* tea, and supping *en républicaine*. I have thus graduated on the political scale, from the extreme of loyalty to the last degree of rebellion. I was at a concert at the house of the charming Mad. de Beaucourt, the very *Muse of royalism* ; and (almost won over to a cause recommended by her elegant compositions) I was joining in the chorus of “ *Vive le roi, quand même,*” when I was reminded of an engagement I had made with a society of another stamp and metal ; and I departed reluctantly, leaving many a gallant “ *chevalier de la bonne cause*” rapturously applauding the following loyal effusions ; composed, played, and sung, by their lovely hostess.

## PREUX CHEVALIER VEUT MOURIR POUR SON ROI.

Preux chevalier, la gloire vous appelle,  
L'honneur vous dit de marcher sous sa loi ;  
Vous le jurez, vous lui serez fidèle,  
Preux chevalier veut mourir pour son roi. (*bis.*)

Au loin déjà la trompette sonore  
Dans tous les cœurs a causé grand émoi ;  
Chant du départ, vous le redit encore :  
Preux chevalier veut mourir pour son roi. (*bis.*)

Adieu, plaisirs, amour ; tant douce amie ;  
Adieu ces lieux, où je reçus ta foi ;  
Cache tes pleurs, idole de ma vie !  
Preux chevalier veut mourir pour son roi. (*bis.*)

Le chevalier, sous la blanche bannière,  
Brulant d'ardeur, au loin répand l'effroi,  
En affrontant les hazards de la guerre,  
Preux chevalier veut mourir pour son roi. (*bis.*)

L'air retentit du cri de la victoire ;  
Et du vainqueur tout a subi la loi.  
Il fut heureux par l'amour et la gloire,  
Le chevalier qui servit bien son roi. (*bis.*)

With this melodized loyalty, still breathing on my ear, I arrived in the anti-room of the hotel where I was to sup ; and while I was unshawling, I caught the first stanzas of the following song, which my presence did

not interrupt; and which, given with infinite humour, was received with rapturous plaudits, warm and sincere as those bestowed on  
*“ Preux chevalier veut mourir pour son Roi.”*

*Cà n’ tiendra pas.*

Comme il faut prendre, en philosophe,  
 Les accidens fâcheux et bons,  
 J’ai supporté la catastrophe,  
 Qui nous ramena les Bourbons.  
 Pour me trouver sur leur passage,  
 J’ai même fait deux ou trois pas,  
 Mais je me suis dis, *“ c’est dommage,”*  
 Cà n’tiendra pas, çà n’tiendra pas.

Quand Berri, D’Artois, D’Angoulême  
 De ville en ville ont colporté,  
 Des héritiers du diadème  
 La militante Trinité.  
 Ils se donnoient pour de grands Princes,  
 Mais bientôt chacun dit, tout bas,  
 Pour leurs grandeurs, ils sont trop minces,  
 Cà n’tiendra pas, çà n’tiendra pas.

Il voudroit régner sur la France,  
 Ce Roi qui, parmi des Français  
 Osa dire avec insolence :

*“ Je dois ma Couronne aux Anglais.”\**

---

\* *“ Je reconnais, qu’ après Dieu, c’est au Prince Régent, que je dois ma Couronne.”*

This public declaration was a deep wound to the honour

Ah ! puisse encore la France entière  
 Dire, en la brisant en éclats,  
 Si tu la dois à l'Angleterre,  
 Ça n'tiendra pas, ça n'tiendra pas."

Je ris tout haut de la jactance  
 De tous ces faquins d'émigrés,  
 Qui, *par peur*, ont quitté la France,  
 Et qui, *par faim*, y sont rentrés.  
 Pauvre petit-fils d'Henri Quatre !  
 Peux tu compter sur ces pieds-plats ?  
 Pour toi, quand il faudra se battre,  
 Ça n'tiendra pas, ça n'tiendra pas.

On prodigue avec insolence  
 Ces rubans, ces marques d'honneur,  
 Que l'on arrache à la vaillance,  
 Au vrai mérite, à la valeur.  
 De ce tort on peut vous absoudre ;  
 Ces croix, ces rubans, ces crachats ;  
 Messieurs, vous avez beau les coudre,  
 Ça, n'tiendra pas, ça n'tiendra pas.

The emperor Julian declared that he most admired, in his favourite Gauls, that gravity of character, which resembled his

---

of the nation, and is thus alluded to in one of the best pamphlets of the day. "*Horribles paroles ! gravées trop profondément dans le cœur de tous les Français, et qu'il est inutile de commenter.*"

own. And though it may appear an affectation of singularity, to agree in this imperial opinion, as applied to the modern French; yet in all circles, among all classes, both in public and in private, I was struck with the tone of quietude and seriousness, the capability of profound and sustained attention, distinguishable equally in the parterres of their theatres, and the circles of their salons. That wild exuberance of gaiety, that boisterous overflowing of animal spirits, found even under the sombre influence of our own less genial clime, is rarely or never seen in France. The gaiety of the French appeared to me, not more a constitutional, than an intellectual vivacity; a sort of moral energy; a prompt, though not a profound sensibility; which gives spirit to their manners, animation to their countenances, and force to their gesticulation. I have occasionally joined a circle of persons that looked

“like their grandsires, cut in alabaster,”

until some subject of interesting discussion was accidentally introduced; and then every eye lighted up, every countenance bright-

ened; and all became animated in gesture, and forcible in expression. The virtue of temperament most peculiarly French, is that even flow of perpetual cheerfulness, which, whatever may be its cause and origin, is most gracious in its effects and influence; which throws a ray even on their gravity; and is infinitely more delightful, than that seemingly automaton vivacity, of which they are accused.

The circles of fashions in Paris, are characterized by a formality in their arrangement, to which their sedentary propensities in all ranks greatly contribute. Nobody is loco-motive, from a love of motion; there are no professed loungers, nor habitual walkers.---Every body sits or reclines, when, where, and as often as he can; and chairs are provided, not only for those who resort to the public gardens, but also in the streets, along the most fashionable Boulevards, and before all the *cafés* and *estaminets*; which are farmed out at a very moderate price. The promenade of persons of fashion is merely a seat in the air. They drive to the gardens of the Tuileries, alight from their carriages, and immediately take their seat under the

shade of the noblest groves of chesnuts, or in the perfumed atmosphere of roses and orange trees.

In the gardens of the Luxembourg, swarms of the ancient inhabitants of that old-fashioned quarter, come forth with their primitive looks, antiquated costume and pet animals, to take their accustomed seats every evening; and remain in endless *causerie*; enjoying their favourite recreation in this lovely spot, until the shades of night send them home to their elevated lodgings, "*au quatrième.*" The circles of the ancient *no-blesse* are formal and precise to a degree that imposes perpetual restraint; the ladies are all seated *à la ronde*; the gentlemen either leaning on the back of their chairs, or separated into small compact groups. Every body rises at the entrance of a new guest, and immediately resumes a seat, which is never finally quitted until the moment of departure. There is no bustling, no gliding, no shifting of place for purposes of coquetry, or views of flirtation; all is repose and quietude among the most animated and cheerful people in the world. My restlessness and activity was a source of great



astonishment and amusement: my walking constantly in the streets and public gardens, and my having nearly made the tour of Paris, on foot, were cited as unprecedented events in the history of female perambulation.

Coming in very late one night, to a grand *réunion*, I made my excuse by pleading the fatigue I had encountered during the day; and I enumerated the different quarters of the town I had walked over, the public places I had visited, the sights I had seen, and the cards I had dropped.—I perceived my fair auditress listening to me at first with incredulous attention; then “panting after me in vain,” through all my movements, losing breath, changing colour, till at last she exclaimed: “*Tenez, madame, je n’en puis plus. Encore un pas, et je n’en reviendrai, de plus de quinze jours.*”

This love of sedentary ease struck me most particularly, at court. At one of the receptions of the Dutchess de Berri (held at the *Elysée Bourbon*), we were detained longer than had been expected in the anti-room, waiting the arrival of her royal highness from the Tuileries, where she dined

with the king. There were a great many ladies, and but few seats. On every side were to be heard, “*Ah, seigneur dieu! que c’est ennuyeux! Comment peut-on se tenir debout, comme ça? Madame, je meurs de fatigue,*” &c. &c. A few nights before, at the play given at the Tuileries, several ladies, extremely well accommodated as I thought, left their places, in search of others, where they might be more at their ease; while English ladies of the highest rank were pushing and squeezing, and standing; too happy to be admitted on any terms, to witness the spectacle of a court play, performed in the magnificent theatre, which recalls all the splendour, and much more than the elegance of the famous *salle des machines* of Louis XIV.

The formality however of those circles, in which it is the fashion to reflect the manners of the *ancien régime*, is not universal. There are many sets and societies, in the immense range of Parisian company, in which the most perfect ease prevails; where it is permitted to sit, or stand, or lounge, to put the *feet on the fender, or the elbow on the table*, as repose may dictate, or familiarity induce;

where the lady of the house does not *positively* insist that her guest must occupy the distinguished *bergère*, nor shudders at the vulgar choice of an humble “*chaise de paille*,” where each person is left to consult his own ease, according to the dictates of his own feelings; without reference to rules of etiquette, or to the established “*bon ton de la parfaitement bonne compagnie*.”

The great attraction and cement of society, in France, is conversation; and, generally speaking, all forms and arrangements tend towards its promotion. No rival splendors, no ostentatious display, no indiscriminate multitude make a part of its scheme. The talents, which lend their charm to social communion, are estimated far beyond the rank that might dignify or the magnificence that might adorn it. In the salon, “Virgil would take his place with Augustus, and Voltaire with Condé.” I have seen Denon and Humbolt received with delight, where princes and ministers were beheld with indifference.

“Et des hommes tels qu’eux marchent à côté des souverains.

The societies of Paris have not yet admitted the necessity of Lions, to keep *ennui* from the door, and to give stimulous to the promptly-exhausted attention of fashionable inanity. The *Dekhli lamas* of *haut ton*, who yawn away their existence in the assemblies of London, are as unknown in Paris, as those intellectual jugglers, who play off their "quips and cracks," for the amusement of prosperous dulness, or those more manual artists, who "*tumble*" themselves into fashionable notoriety, and who frequently, without recompense, as without esteem, "strut their hour upon the stage, and then are heard no more."

Knowledge indeed is so much diffused, and a taste for scientific investigation so strenuously cultivated, in France, that judgment seems to approach the precision of mathematical certainty; and the natural tact of the people, the quickness of their perception, thus strengthened by cultivation, leaves pretensions hopeless of success. There invariably "*le savoir, dans un fat, devient impertinence.*" Many foreign charlatans, who have been for a time countenanced in England, and crowned with complete success in

Ireland, have been the public laugh of Paris, the amusement of idlers, and the contempt of the learned.

---

“ *Engagez vos sujets à se marier le plutôt possible,*” is the political ordinance of a French writer, strictly obeyed in France. The youth of both sexes marry now, as formerly, much earlier than in England ; and without pausing to consider the effects of such premature unions, upon moral and political life, it is very obvious that the pleasures of private society gain materially by the change. No manœuvring mothers, nor candidate daughters, appear upon the scene, bent exclusively on canvassing for a matrimonial election,\* *hérissées* with maternal *amour-propre*, or agitated by fears of rivalry, or hopes of conquest. No cautious heir, suspicious of *undue influence*, wraps himself up in the safety of

---

\* An heiress by no means makes the same sensation, in France, as amongst us ; because it is generally understood that suitable arrangements have been made for her establishment, before she appears in public.

silence, and in the affectation of neglect ; whispering his nothings into the ear of his equally cautious companions, and violating every form of good breeding, by a strict observance of the rules---of *prudent reserve*. Young unmarried women, indeed, seldom appear in society, except in the domestic circle, or at the *bals-parés*, 'which are sufficiently numerous in the gay season of Paris, to afford ample sources of pleasure and dissipation ; and which beginning and ending early, and being devoted to their graceful and elegant dances, are infinitely more calculated for youthful recreation, than the late hours and unwholesome crowds of London assemblies ; where youth so soon loses its spirit and its bloom ; and where the often exhibited beauty grows stale on the sickly eye of fashion, before it has accomplished the end of its annual and nightly exhibitions.\*

Marriages are still pretty generally ar-

---

\* Very young girls, do not in general, frequent the *soirées*, or mere conversational societies, because they do not themselves desire it. To balls and to concerts they go at a much earlier age, than is usual in England ; and there is no decided period for "*coming out*." No unmarried woman, of any age, can go to court.

ranged by the prudence and foresight of *les bons parens* ; but daughters are no longer shut up in convents, till the day of their nuptials ; nor are they condemned to behold for the first time their husband and their lover, almost at the same moment. Educated chiefly at home, they mingle with the customary guest of the maternal circle, from which the companion of their future life is not unfrequently chosen ; and since inclination is never violated, nor repugnance resisted, it must often happen among the young, the pleasing, and the susceptible, that duty and preference may go together, and obedience know that

“ *Il est doux trouver, dans un amant qu'on aime,* .

“ *Un époux que l'on doit aimer.*”

To this may be added, that a young French woman, like a young English woman, may forward parental ambition, by her own aspiring views ; and “ *donner dans la seigneurie,*” with a ready recantation of the romantic dogma of “love in a cottage,” which in the end frequently turns out to be a cottage, without love.

The French youth of both sexes, of the present generation, are peculiarly distinguished by all the genuine and delightful charac

teristics of that most delightful period of human existence. Spirited, energetic, frank, and communicative, they have found the order of things, under which they have been brought up, peculiarly favourable to their moral development. The military and the scientific education of the young men have acted mutually and favourably upon each other; adding to force and activity, a just appreciation of scientific knowledge; and destroying that false estimate of useless and frivolous acquirements, which made the merit and the charm of the *abbés* and *petits-maitres* of the old regime. None of these fluttering insects now appear, hovering round the toilette, and swarming at the levées of beauty; lisping their critiques on patches and poetry, deciding with importance on a tragedy or a cosmetic, and claiming it as an equal distinction, to judge the merits of an epigram, or to pronounce on the flounce of a petticoat. Of these "unfinished things" not a trace remains; and I have seen the sudden appearance of a London "*dandy*" make as great a sensation in a French assembly, by its novelty and incomprehensibility, as when the *ornithorynchus paradoxus* came to confound



the systems, and dislocate the arrangements of the naturalists, at the *jardin des plantes*.

I was one evening in the apartment of the Princesse de Volkonski (a Russian lady), awaiting the commencement of one of her pretty Italian operas, when one of these “fashion-mongering boys,” (as Beatrice calls them), newly arrived in Paris, appeared at the door of the salon, flushed with the conscious pride of the toilette, and reconnoitring the company through his glass. I had the honour to be recognized by him; he approached, and half-yawned, half articulated some enquiries, which he did not wait to be answered, but drawled on to somebody else, whom he distinguished with his notice. A very pleasant little French woman, the daughter of the Comte de L--s--ge, was talking to me, when my English *merveilleux* joined us. Mad. de V.—— stared at him with unsated curiosity, and evident amusement; and when he had passed on, asked, “*Mais qu’est-ce que cela veut dire?*” I answered, “*C’est un dandi!*”

“*Un dandi!*” she repeated, “*un dandi! c’est donc un genre parmi vous, qu’un dandi?*”

I replied, “no; rather *a variety in the*

*species.*" I endeavoured to describe a *dandy* to her, as well as *it* would bear definition; asking her, whether there was no *pendant* for it in French society? "*Mais, mon Dieu, oui,*" she replied; "*nos jeunes duchesses sont à-peu-près des dandis.*"\*

A few days after this exhibition of *dandyism*, I met with another of the tribe in the hotel of the Baron Denon. He was a young diplomatist, and added the weight of official solemnity to the usual foppery of a *merveilleux*. Associating only with his own spy-glass, he passed with languid indifference from one object to another in the splendid collection he had been brought to see; but without *once* noticing, by word or look, the eminent and celebrated person, who was so much more worthy of attention, than even the treasures he possessed. M. Denon, too much amused to be hurt by this want of good

---

\* I was told that many of the young dutchesses, who now claim the supreme privilege of the "*divin tabouret, et qui se traduisent en ridicule, malgré leur qualité,*" assume an air of superiority over the less privileged classes, which I suppose induced a French gentleman to observe to me, as the Dutchess de ——— passed by us: "*De toutes nos jeunes duchesses, voilà la plus insolente.*"

manners in his guest, followed him, with a look of pleased attention. I could almost trace in his eye a desire to place this modern curiosity among his Chinese josses, and bamboo pagodas. When this rare specimen of “*quaint fashions of the times*” took his leave, Mons. D--- exclaimed with a smile, and a shrug of the shoulders : “ *Quel drôle de corps qu’un dandi !*” I was surprised to find that the Egyptian traveller had so far extended his study of the human character, as to discover at once an English *dandy*, by his specific character.

By those accustomed to the systematic politeness and ceremonious courtesy of the old regime, the military youth of France are accused of a *brusquerie*, a certain force and bluntness of manner, foreign to the national urbanity. It is most certain that “*les graces*” do not now receive that homage, which the “*petits marquis, à talons rouges,*” offered on their altars in former times. Boys are no longer studied in the “sad ostent” of idle compliment. Few *petits-bons-hommes* of eight years old would address their handsome mother, like the little Duc de Maine, and exclaim, “*vous êtes belle comme un ange !*” The

élèves of the polytechnic schools, and of the Lycées, have more of the careless boldness, which distinguishes the manly pupils of Westminster and Harrow, than the “*petits soins*” and “*jolies tournures*,” with which the little Richelieus won hearts and ruined reputations, at fifteen. And though these young, and generally ardent votaries of science possess less erudition, and are less grounded in classical lore, than the profound scholars of Cambridge, or the elegant students of Oxford, they are still far more extensively acquainted with every branch of useful knowledge, with history, science, and philosophy, than the best of their predecessors, under the ancient regime. If fewer Arnauds, Daciers, and La Mottes, are to be expected from the rising generation, the schools of science promise abundance of worthy\* successors to D’Alemberts, the Diderots, the Cabanis, the Bichats, the La Places, the Bertholets, and the Cuviers.

---

\* There is no circumstance, in the appearance of the National Institute, more striking nor more interesting, than the vast proportion of young men, who have forced themselves, by superior talent, within its walls.

The belles-lettres of their national literature seem to come to the French youth, as reading and writing did to *Dogberry*, by nature. Persons of all classes quote the popular authors of the last hundred years, as if they had imbibed their effusions with their first nourishment; and no one is ashamed to write like a man of letters; nor, however high his rank, confines himself to the “*style d’un homme de qualité*.”\*

The law of conscription, and still more the personal influence which Napoleon exerted over the higher ranks, by inducing or by forcing their sons, to enter, at an early age, into the army, much interrupted the course of education, and checked the progress of elegant acquirement. But in all ages, and under all reigns, the army was the hereditary profession of the young French nobility; and the elder sons were as invariably *guidons* and colonels, as the *cadets* were prelates and abbés. I can, however, on my own experience, attest the ardour, with which the young

---

\* A phrase much in fashion, before the revolution, was “*écrire en homme de qualité*.” “*C’est dommage que la révolution tarisse la source de tous ces bons ridicules*,” says a modern satirist.

men of the highest rank, civil and military, return to those studies, from which they had been forcibly estranged. I have known the heirs to the most distinguished names in modern celebrity, to the most illustrious titles in historic record, not less regular and assiduous attendants on the daily lectures of Cuvier, St. Fond, Fourcroy, Haüy, than those who have to subsist by the exercise of their acquired talents.

It is this attention to scientific and philosophical research, which occupies so generally the mornings of young Frenchmen, and throws an imputation on the capital, that there are few gentleman-like persons to be seen in its streets. It is quite true that the young men, in their black stocks and shabby hats, hurrying from lecture to lecture,\* hastening to catch the hours of one public library, or to overtake those of another, whether on foot, in their "*Bogey*s *Anglaises*,"

---

\* The number of public institutions, established and supported by government for national education, all well attended, are a sufficient proof of the universal diffusion of knowledge, and of the general application to study of the rising generation.

or in their own ill-appointed *cabriolets*, are by no means so ornamental to a great city, as those “neat and trimly dressed” votaries of English fashion, who, for the benefit of the public, and their own gratification, parade their persons and their *ennui*, at stated hours, in stated places; who preside over the folds of a neckcloth, or dictate the varnish which should illustrate a boot. Street exhibition is, indeed, wholly unknown in Paris; and no man, young or old, founds his celebrity on rivalling his own coachman, or upon the superior excellence and appointment of his *turn-out*. The extreme on the other side of the question amounts, indeed, too frequently to the ludicrous; and the point of preference must be left to the umpire of those, who are interested in, and adequate to the discussion.

The settlement of the French government, under the imperial reign, produced that public calm, which is favourable to the return of the long-scattered lights of science and learning; and public instruction was reassumed with a vigour and universality, almost unprecedented in any other country. The regime of the *Lycées* comprehended the study of literature, ancient and modern, the

mathematical and physical sciences, as they apply to general life and to professions. To these branches were added the modern languages; and six years was the time fixed for the studies of the pupil.\*

The polytechnic school, devoted to the mathematical, physical, and chemical sciences, and to the graphic arts, was destined to form and educate pupils for the service of the nation.† How well, and how willingly the young *élèves* fulfilled the intentions of the legislature, in its foundation, was evinced during the struggle which France made against the arms of Europe, in 1814; when this little band of boyish heroes defended the heights of *Mont-Martre*, with an energy of spirit, a desperation of courage, and a display of skill, which would have consecrated any

\* The number of *écoles, prytanées, lycées, écoles spéciales*. colleges, academies, and institutes, which succeeded to the ten colleges "*de plein exercice*," where the French and Latin languages were taught, with theology, law, medicine, and the arts, are countless. Theology alone is a sufferer, by the abolition of the ancient seminaries.

† Napoleon latterly excited the jealousy of the pupils of the polytechnic school, by the exclusive attention he paid to the military school at *St. Cyr*.



cause ; and which recalled the youthful bands of Sparta, fighting in honourable and dear alliance for glory or for death.\*

I have at this moment before my eyes one of these “veteran youths,” as I beheld him, describing the evacuation of Paris by the French troops ; and never did the mind create a finer vision of self-devoted patriotism, with all the harmonizing attributes of spirit, grace, eloquence, and passion. He spoke of the emperor, merely as a great captain, worthy of the devotion of his soldiers, by his personal bravery and military genius. “But,” added he, “it was not for *him* we fought—it was for the fast-eclipsing glory of France that we struggled ; and even, when all seemed lost *to others* ; hope still remained *to us* ! The troops, afflicted, but not discouraged, even when the barriers of Paris

---

\* Suddenly called from their classes into service, with only the benefit of a few weeks’ exercise and discipline, to prepare them for the arduous conflict, they were appointed to serve the artillery, destined to cover the approach to their positions ; and they strewed the spot with the bodies of the enemy ; defending their post till the barriers could no longer be protected. Great numbers of them were found dead upon the guns they had so gallantly worked.

were forced, were still eager to rally, to save the country, or to die upon the bayonets of the enemy. But shameful degradation, not glorious death, awaited them: they were hunted out of Paris, and ordered, by the command of foreigners, to retire to the lonely destination of their ignoble retreat. Oh! then, what passions agitated the breasts of the brave, when the death they supplicated was denied them!"

He paused, and added, in a hurried tone, "The march of the troops, through the streets of Paris, was characterized by all the fiercest wildness of despair; and was witnessed by its weeping population with sympathetic emotion. The men flung down their arms, and refused to obey their officers; they tore their hair, they rent their garments—courage unsubdued, spirits unbroken, indignation unrestrained, shame unconcealed, all mingled, all betrayed their symptoms in their distracted movements; and their cries became howls, when, for the last time, they were drawn beyond the barriers of that proud city, which their arms and blood had nearly made the mistress of the world!"

"You witnessed, then, the scene?" I

asked, affected by the emotions of the young narrator :

“ *Si je l'ai vu !* ” he exclaimed, his eyes flashing fire through the tears that gushed from them. “ *Madame, je suis moi-même un brigand de la Loire !* ”

He had, in fact, only returned to his family a few weeks before. Should the high-minded Mad. de B—s—re find in this slight sketch a resemblance to her gallant son, she will judge of the impression made on my mind by the character, spirit, and eloquence of the original.

But, while monasteries and convents now rise on every side ; while *Ursulines* and *Car-melites* again revive and multiply by royal ordinance, and by princely encouragement, the Polytechnic School is no more : nor could the bravery, spirit, and devotion of its pupils save it from that degradation, with which all institutions, marked by the energy and character of the age, are overwhelmed in the new order of administration.

Even the course of female education, so obviously improved within the last thirty years, has received a new direction, and assumes the character of the rules and ordi-

nances of the convent of St. Cyr. The accomplished women,\* formerly at the head of the national seminaries, for the education of female youth, are now either displaced, to make way for pious abbesses, or obliged to adopt vows and rules, perfectly monastic.

The *maison d'éducation* at Ecoun, where three hundred daughters of military men, and public functionaries were educated, has recently undergone a change that amounts to its dissolution; and during the time that I was at Paris, a pitched battle was said to have taken place, between the few of its original pupils, who still remained, and the host of young royalist and emigrant ladies, who have recently filled up its ranks. I was assured that their missile contest rivalled, in force and energy, the celebrated conclave battle; when cardinals laid aside arguments for blows, and ink-horns flew, where hypothesis had resounded.

Talking over this curious circumstance to an old royalist lady, who had two daughters at Ecouen, she exclaimed, “ *Pour ces jeunes*

---

\* I believe the former directress *en chef* of the school of the Legion of Honour, was Mad. de Campan, widow of the celebrated Gen. Campan.

*Buonapartistes, ce sont des petites vipères à étouffer !*” The same lady assured me that, having placed her son in a military school immediately after the king’s arrival in 1814, the conflict of political principles ran so high, between the royalist and Buonapist boys, that she was obliged to withdraw her son, in terror for his limbs or his life.

The change, in the female seminaries of education, are said to be affected by the pious zeal and active interference of Mad. La Duchesse d’Angoulême, who personally interests herself in the nomination of both pupils and directresses. Other Madame de Glapions\* are now sought for, zealous and

---

\* Mad. de Glapion, superior of St. Cyr, seems to have owed her distinction and elevation to her performance of *Mordecai*, the Jew, in one of the pious tragedies, acted by the novices of that institution, for the amusement of the king and the court.

There was a malicious report, when I was at Paris, among the anti-royalists, that Monsieur *Chateaubriand’s* M.S. tragedy of “*Moses*,” which has been so often read in private society, was *to be got up* by the young ladies of Ecouen, by permission of Madame, in imitation of the *Esther* and *Athalie* of Racine. “*Des voix pures et virginales*,” as Mad. de Suard calls the singers of St. Cyr, were to chaunt the choruses of *Moses*, which are said to

severe as the charming actress of *Mordecai*, to restore rules, which she alone could preserve among the rather restive young ladies of St. Cyr, whose wanderings and extasies on *divine love*\* forced the illustrious foundress to declare, “ *J’aimerois mieux avoir à gouverner un empire.*”

This union of tent-stitch and faith, of dogmas and doctrines, with nouns and pronouns, excites, on the part of the *ultras*, boundless admiration for the royal personage, who revives a mode of education long exploded, which had certainly no influence on female morals, as the conduct of the Cha-

resemble, in figurative ardor, the Songs of Solomon; and the saintly, though laical, *author himself* was to perform the part of *Moses*, and to lead his fair tribe to the land of promise.

\* The *divine love* of Mad. Guyon had such an effect on the young ladies of St. Cyr, and her “*court moyen*” exerted so powerful an influence, that, says their elegant historian, “*on étoit en contemplation, on avoit des extases; le gout pour l’oraison devenoit si puissant, que tous les devoirs étoient négligés!*”

The result then of this over-strained piety and religious observance, seems only to have been the neglecting of imperious duties, and the substitution of *oraisons* for practical virtues.

teauroux and de Priés, and the Mancinis evince. But, upon all occasions, the *ultras* merit the eulogium, applied to them by the deputy of Rouen, “*Messieurs, je vous trouve toujours plus royaux que le Roi, et plus religieux que le Pape.*”

# FRANCE.

---

## BOOK III..



101

### SOCIETY.

“ There ought to be a system of manners in every nation, which a well-formed mind would be disposed to relish. To make us love our country, our country ought to be lovely.”

BURKE.





# FRANCE.

---

## BOOK III.

---

### SOCIETY.

*Woman.—Her former Influence, and actual Position in French Society.—National Characteristics.—Madame D'Houdetot.—Married Life.—Gallantry, Manners, Education.—Domestic Habits.—The Femme de Chambre.—La Bonne.—Domestic Servitude.—The Toilette.—The Royal Trousseau.*

**I**N all considerations of society, whether political or moral, the mind habitually directs its views to those relations, which spring from the intellectual and physical forces of man alone. But there is a light and ornamental capital, crowning the massive columns of the social edifice, upon which, when the mind has estimated the depth of the foundation, and the strength of the base,

it rests with pleasure and recreation. Fragile and delicate, full of grace, and replete with harmony, this last work of the almighty architect seems to typify the benevolent intentions, which originated and planned the whole structure of creation.

Woman, in all regions, and under all institutions, as wife, and as mother, exercises, through the delightful medium of these sacred ties, a direct, or an indirect, influence on the constitution of society. And it is a curious paradox, that in the country, where she has reigned with the most unlimited controul, she has been denied all chartered jurisdiction in its political government. There seems, however, to have been at all times a conventional agreement, in French society, to counteract the severe proscription of those Salic laws, which certainly were not established, on the presumption of female inability to reign;\* since, under the title of REGENT, women have governed the helm

---

\* This is the ungallant supposition of Mezeray. Cardinal Mazarin declared that the Salic law was established, because it was always to be dreaded that a queen would be ruled, "*par des amants incapables de GOUVERNER DOUZE POULES !*"

with all the despotism of the most absolute monarchy ; and occasionally with a tyranny, which has been justly charged against them as a reproach, by the satirists of France and of other countries.

Women have never been called to the throne of elective monarchies, nor have taken any share in republican governments. Their genius, tact, and address suit best with the *finesse*, which rules the cabinets of hereditary and despotic monarchies. The fair Gabrielles and the Entragues had no power in the court of Henry IV. when opposed in his mind to the wisdom of his minister Sully ; whose government almost approached to the vigour of republican rule. They had a very different influence upon the affairs of their royal lover, from that exercised in the courts of Louis XIV. and XV. when the women created marshals, displaced ministers, intrigued with foreign cabinets, and corresponded with imperial sovereignty.\* It was

---

\* It is pleasant to consider how much the affairs of Europe must have been influenced, by the intrigues of Mad. de Pompadour. Her resentment against the Duc de Richelieu, for refusing to marry his son to her daughter, had nearly proved fatal to France. "*Ses tracasse-*

in these two reigns most especially, that love and politics went hand in hand, and the reins of government became entangled with the flowery bands of pleasure.

During the progress of the revolution, woman gradually became circumscribed within her own proper sphere ; and when strength succeeded to feebleness, and force to intrigue, the delicacy of female perception, and the refinement of female agency, were no longer

*ries pensèrent, comme on verra, faire échouer l'entreprise sur Minorque, &c."* Such was her conscious power, that she offered to make Voltaire a cardinal, on condition of his writing a new version of Psalms. Her correspondence with Marie Thérèse, and the homage offered her by that empress, are too well known to need comment.

It is curious to observe the coolness, with which even philosophy, in those days, considered the influence of a royal mistress. Voltaire was among the flatterers of Mad. de Pompadour ; and Rousseau, speaking of the Minister de Choiseul, observes : "*Il gagnoit dans mon esprit au peu de cas que je faisois de ses prédécesseurs, sans excepter Mad. de Pompadour, que je regardois comme une façon de premier ministre. Et quand le bruit courut que, d'elle ou de lui, l'un des deux expulseroit l'autre, je crus faire des vœux pour la gloire de la France, en en faisant, pour que M. de Choiseul triomphat.*" Mad. de Pompadour has left behind her, in France, the character of an ignorant, shallow-minded, and vindictive woman.

in demand. Another and a better scene was opened to woman's activity. Devoted *to* and *for* those, who had claims upon her feelings and her exertions, she confined her sovereignty to a more domestic existence. It would almost appear that this great event occurred, for the purpose of demonstrating to what noble extremes of heroism female nature was capable of attaining.\* The

---

\* The courageous attachment and indefatigable perseverance, which the women exhibited, during the reign of terror, was most magnanimous. In the first instance, more than two thousand women of condition presented themselves before the Convention, to petition for the proscribed, to whom they had given shelter and protection, at the greatest risk; and in many instances, when they could no longer save or protect, they shared captivity, and even death, with the objects of their pity or their affections. Antigone and the Grecian daughter afford not examples of filial affection, more heroical, than were evinced in the persevering endurance of Mademoiselle Cazotte, (the lovely daughter of the charming author of "*Le diable amoureux* ;") by Mad de Paysac, and Mad. de \*\*\*; the one sacrificing, the other risking, her life for their illustrious friends, Rabaud St. Etienne, and Condorcet. The more than heroic, the almost superhuman de Sombreuil, and the young and incomparable Mademoiselle de la Rochefoucauld, who saved the life of her aged father in the Vendean wars, by a courage and ingenuity which woman alone knows how to unite, are no less worthy of record and admiration.

splendid portraits of self-immolation in the cause of the best feelings and affections of humanity, which many of the illustrious victims of the reign of terror left behind them, have shed a glory upon the sex, whose disinterested virtues and high capabilities they have so signally illustrated.

No longer dazzled and debased by the splendor of a corrupt court, the women of France learned to *love their country*; for whose service they now, for the first time, nurtured a future *citizen* at their maternal bosoms. “*Voilà deux fils que j’ai élevés, pour servir leur roi,*” said an old royalist lady, as she read a letter from her son, on his march to quarters. “*And I,*” said the mother of a gallant general---“*J’ai consacré mon unique fils au service de sa patrie.*”

In despotic governments *undue* influence

---

To these may be added the martyr-names of Maillé, de Bussy, de Mouchy, Roland, and last, not least, the heroic Elizabeth of France, who died the victim of sisterly affection. She might have saved herself with her brothers, who fled from France, had she not preferred death, with her unfortunate relations, who remained.—It is curious to remark, that a Mad. La Valette distinguished herself by her resolute determination to die with her husband, during the reign of terror.

is exercised and admissible ; and the influence of women being, to a certain extent, *always undue*, her powers are particularly called forth in a state, where the will of the sovereign is the law ; and where by his very position he is thrown, for resource against his own *ennui*, upon female conversation and allurements. It is thus that mistresses purchase the privilege of political interference, by the labour of amusing some royal satrap, “ *qui n’est plus amusable* ;” and it was thus that for thirty-years de Maintenon occupied the idleness of the king, and influenced the decisions of his cabinet ; when *she* had no longer beauty to charm, nor *he* susceptibility to be attracted.

This avenue to female ambition has long been closed, in France. No lady now brings her distaff into the council-chamber, nor can hope to be complimented by some obsequious *contrôleur-general* with, “ *Eh, quoi, madame, le grand Colbert vous a donc transmis son âme !*” \* But although the *executive* power of

---

\* This speech of Dodun, *contrôleur-général*, during the regency, was made to Mad. de Prie, who had got up a speech on some state question, under the tuition of the crafty Duverney. This woman, who is described by contemporary writers, as “ *femme perdue, intrigante, spiri-*



the sex is confined to the sway of their *domestic regimes*, the philosophy of legislation is by no means denied to their investigation. The reigning politics of the agitated day, during which I resided in France, were dis-

---

*tuelle et libertine*," governed for some time both France and the regent; and was herself governed by the four intriguing brothers of the name of Paris. She was the cause that the family of her royal lover did not give a queen to France. Offended by the coldness with which Mad. de Vermandois received her, she left her in a rage, exclaiming: "*Va; tu ne seras jamais reine de France*:" and she fulfilled her prediction, by preventing the marriage of Louis XV. with one of the most illustrious, amiable, and lovely women of Europe. Mad. la Marquise de Prie gave away, or sold, places of the highest importance. The indolence of the regent, and his devotion to every species of pleasure and of dissipation, left a boundless scope to abuse; and the same observation might be applied to him, as Cardinal Dubois made of Louis XV. when the deputies from the parliament of Paris came with a remonstrance to Versailles. The Cardinal on this occasion dismissed them, saying, "*On ne parle jamais d'affaires au roi*." This Mad. de Prie once threw into the fire the remonstrances of the parliaments of Rennes, and of Thoulouse, observing gaily, that they were of a "*mauvais ton*," and "*sentoient la province !!!*" When she read some songs made against her conduct and character, she observed: "*Voilà ce que sont les François, quand ils sont trop bien*." Such are the good old times, which the modern loyalty of England and of France seek to have restored!

cussed by even young women, with considerable force and precision ; while the men listened with indulgence, if not with deference. Feebleness and intrigue seem wholly to have yielded to open and free discussion. Romances are laid aside for “ *exposés* ;” the prettiest women in Paris run through all the intricacies of finance, with the accuracy of a chancellor of the exchequer ; and “ *lips, which not by words pleased only*,” became eloquent in the discussion of “ *le Budget*.”

“ *Nous voici, ma chère*,” said Mad. de R---lze, as I entered one evening her salon ; “ *Nous voici toutes, plus enfoncées dans les horreurs de la politique, que la chambre des communes et tout le parlement d’Angleterre ne pourroient l’être* :” and she went on with an argument on *ways and means*, which our arrival had for a moment interrupted. Even politics, however, become amusing, when discussed by a well-educated and elegant French woman ; and I have heard Englishmen of considerable talent and judgment declare, that the accuracy and precision of many fair politicians, with whom they had conversed, even on abstract points of govern-

ment, went far beyond the level assigned to the mental powers of their sex.

It is this *wide sphere* of discussion, unrestricted by ridicule and unlimited by fashion, which gives the play to their imagination, the force to their intellect ; and confers that charm of facility, elegance, and effect to their language, which habits of general conversation can alone induce. It is thus that they are qualified to become the companions and friends of men, as well as their mistresses and wives. The coarseness of exclusive male society is not sought in France, to avoid the insipidity of female circles. Nor is all wit, brilliancy, and talent left behind, with the empty decanters after dinner ; to make room for that “ infinite deal of nothings,” which, with us, is presumed to be a necessary qualification, for joining the maudlin priestesses of the tea-table.

There is perhaps no country in the world, where the social position of woman is so delectable, as in France. The darling child of society, indulged, not spoiled ; presiding over its pleasures, preserving its refinements, taking nothing from its strength, adding much

to its brilliancy; permitted the full exercise of all her faculties, retaining the full endowment of all her graces; she pursues the golden round of her honoured existence; limited only in her course by her feebleness and her taste, by her want of power and absence of inclination, to “overstep the modesty of nature,” or to infringe upon privileges, exclusively the attribute of the stronger sex.

“To paint the character of woman,” says Diderot, “you must use the feather of a butterfly’s wing.” He must have meant the character of a French woman, who unites to more solid qualities, many of the peculiar attributes of that lively insect. Light, brilliant, and volatile, she seems to flutter on the surface of life, with endless adaptations to its forms; but, quick, shrewd, and rapid in her perceptions, she appears to reach by intuition, what intellect vainly toils to obtain by inference and combination. More susceptible than sensible, more awakened through her imagination than excited through her heart, love is to her almost a *jeu d’enfant*. The distrust she inspires in her lover, acts favourably for her interests on the natural inconstancy of man; and she secures the du-

rability of her chain, by the carelessness with which she imposes it.

Sharing largely in the national deference for ties of blood, she is peculiarly adapted to the influence of habitual attachments ; and in whatever other countries friendship may raise her altars, it is in France, and by French women, perhaps, that she will find them best served. I saw, during my residence in that country, so many instances of this pure and ennobling principle, that for the first time I comprehended the preference of Rousseau, for a people, among whom the Epinays and the Luxembourgs afforded, in his own instance, so many illustrations of his hypothesis ; and where the *friend* he found, compensated him for the *mistress* and the *wife*, “ *qu’il n’auroit jamais prise en France.*”

It is no uncommon thing in that country, to see the most lasting attachment succeed to the most lively passion ; and all that was faulty, in unlicensed love, become all that is respectable, in disinterested friendship. There is nothing more common in France, than to behold long-attached friends pairing off from the more properous lists of society, to unite their forces against the attacks of adversity ;

and suffering with resignation, because they suffer together. These friendships, equally common between individuals of different and of the same sexes, are tacit eulogiums on the marriage state, in its best aspect; and indicate the necessity of a sympathy of interests and feelings, with some being, willing to blend its existence and identity with our own; even when passion no longer animates, nor love cements the tie of the communion.

I have at this moment present in my recollection many friends, whom I saw dwelling together in perfect confidence and intimate union; providing for each other's wants, indulgent to each other's infirmities, giving mutual accommodation to each other's weaknessess, and hand-in-hand, stealing down the evening path of life; bereft of all the conflicting passions, which agitated its morning; and retaining enough only of the heart's vital heat, to warm the chill atmosphere of age and debility. These are the mild lights which gleam along the broken surface of society; when the meteor blaze of youth and pleasure are extinguished for ever, by nature or by time.

This determination of the affections to-

wards friendship, so observable among the French of all classes, and most particularly among the women, seems the inherent tendency of the nation; and is by no means a revolutionary virtue. When *le bon homme*, la Fontaine, lost his inestimable and faithful friend and protectress, Mad. de la Sablière, in whose hotel he lived; Mad. de Hervart immediately presented herself to the afflicted poet; and abruptly entering his room, she said: "*J'ai appris le malheur qui vous est arrivé; je viens vous proposer de loger chez moi.*"

"*J'y allois,*" was the simple and affecting reply.\*

---

\* However suited the character and manners of the French women may be to friendship, they by no means engross a virtue, which is to a great degree national. While I was at Paris, Voltaire's *walking cane* was sold for five hundred francs, and purchased by the celebrated surgeon Dubois. His joy at obtaining this relic was excessive. A gentleman present observed that he had paid too dear for his purchase. "*Comment,*" he replied with vivacity, "*quand c'est pour l'ami Corvisart?*" The well-known friendship of these distinguished men, is equally honourable to both parties. Mons. Corvisart is justly celebrated for his work "*on the heart,*" both on the continent and in England.

A young and devoted friend of the brave Caffarelli, saw that celebrated man fall at *St. Jean d'Acre*, while fighting

It must certainly have been in some fit of cynicism, that Montaigne declares the inca-

---

by his side. The death of his gallant friend drove him to despair; and his grief was so touching, his despondency so profound, that it became a subject of conversation to the whole army. It at last reached the ears of Buonaparte, who paid a personal visit to the mourner. He is said to have shed tears on the occasion, and endeavoured in vain to console him, by observing: "It is at least a solace to you, that your brave friend died covered with glory."

"*La gloire!*" repeated the young man indignantly, and in all the petulance of grief; "*qu' est-ce que la gloire? Elle est faite pour un homme tel que vous.*" "Give him some laudanum," said Buonaparte coldly; and when he had seen it administered, silently left the tent. A few days after this interview, the young man distinguished himself by a desperate intrepidity, which evinced his desire to follow his friend, "*de mourir de la mort de Roland.*" His valour became a subject of admiration in common with his friendship, and the army were unwearied in their praises of his spirit and his sensibility. Buonaparte became tired of the subject, and fearful of the example; and he observed in the hearing of several of his young companions: "*Pour ce jeune \*\*\*\*, c'est un brave garçon, mais je l'aurois fusillé, si cela eût continué.*" This anecdote, which was given me as a fact, affords a pendant for the story of the king of Prussia's ordering an officer to be shot, who on the eve of a battle had kept a light in his tent after the prohibited hour, for the purpose of writing to his wife.—Buonaparte's friendship for the gallant General Desaix is said to have been sincere and ardent. When the news of his death was



pability of women for so elevated a sentiment as friendship, to which denunciation he adds, in his own quaint way: *La suffisance ordinaire des femmes n'est pas, pour répondre à cette conférence et communication, nourrisse de cette sainte coutume; ni leur âme ne semble assez ferme, pour soutenir l'estreinte d'un noeud si pressé et si durable.*" The devoted friendship of his own favourite, "*Royne Marguerite de Navarre,*" for the "*preux Roi,*" her brother, is a sufficient refutation of his position.

If a lively solicitude for the interest of those recommended to their notice, if acts of kindness may be considered as tests of a predisposition to friendship, I can answer, on my own experience, for the qualifications with which the French are endowed, for feeling and inspiring that sentiment. I universally observed among them an eagerness to oblige, a promptness to serve, a readiness to sympathize with the little every-day crosses in life of their acquaintance; which, proceeding perhaps from quick susceptibility for

---

brought to him, at the battle of Marengo, he was profoundly affected, and exclaimed in a tone of great emotion: "*Que ne puis-je pleurer?*" One of his first acts, on his return to Paris, was to raise a statue to his memory.

impression, assumes the character of the most genuine and perfect good-nature, that ever warmed or cheered the common intercourse of society. The charge of insincerity, to which the high polish of refined manners, under the old regime, subjected the whole nation, now appears to have so little foundation, that I am well aware I am not singular in asserting their professions to fall short of the unsuspecting confidence, with which they come forward to oblige, to serve, and to accommodate even strangers, whom chance has presented to their notice. Associating with them in their circles, in Paris, and occasionally a resident in their *châteaux* in the country, I uniformly found their courteous manners accompanied by kindness and attention, and by all those little nameless acts of friendship, which showed them intent upon contributing to the ease and comfort of their guests.\* This may be

---

\* This kindness and warmth of feeling did not terminate with our residence in France. Having met with a heavy pecuniary loss, during our absence from home, the circumstance reached the ears of our French friends; and it produced us many letters of enquiry and condolence,

indeed what Sterne calls the “overflowing of the pancreatic juices;” but who would stop to explore the cause, while benefitting by the effects.

A French woman, like a child, requires a strong and rapid series of sensations, to make her feel the value of existence. Her prompt susceptibility changes its emotion with its object; and that cheek, which is now dimpled with smiles, but a few moments hence will perhaps be humid with a tear. When it was objected that some royalist ladies had attended the trial of those unfortunate persons, whose hands and heads were severed, for a conspiracy, more worthy the correction of the “*petites-maisons*,” than of so barbarous an infliction; a gentleman undertook their defence before a very mixed company, where I was present, by saying,

“*Que voulez-vous? Les Françaises aiment de pareilles scènes, parce qu’il leur faut toujours des battemens de cœur; et comment faire battre le cœur, sans une grande sensation?*” “*Monsieur*,” observed an old royalist lady, with

---

backed by the most pressing invitation to return and live amongst them, till our losses were retrieved.

indignation, “ *une véritable Française n’aura jamais une grande sensation, que pour son Roi.*”

“ *Quelle délicatessc de pensée !*” was the reply.

The sensibility of the present race of French women, however, is by no means exclusively engrossed by *the king*. Even his holiness, the pope, was said to inspire those *battemens de cœur*, so necessary to their existence.

“ You will do me the greatest favour,” said a beautiful Mad. D\*\*\*\*, “ if you will put me in the way of being blessed by the pope.” As it was well understood, that Mad. D--- had, as yet, *no call* from “ *sister-angels*,” the pious request excited much astonishment. The petition was however granted; and as the pope’s apartment can “ *ne’er by woman’s foot be trod*,” Mad. D--- crossed him in his garden, and received the wished-for *benediction*. But this was not sufficient; she intreated permission to kiss his hand. Monsieur \*\*\* struggled against the impropriety of this request; but Mad. D--- was urgent, and would not be denied. “ *Et la raison de cet empressement?*” asked Monsieur, \*\*\*. “ *C’est que cela me donnera un battement*

*de cœur ; et que je suis si heureuse quand le cœur me bat,*” was her candid answer.

I have known a French lady attend, with the most devoted care, her sick friend, for weeks together ; live at her bed-side, “ explain the asking eye,” anticipate every wish, and forego every pleasure, to fulfil the duties of friendship ; and yet the death of this person, wept for a few hours with bitterness and vehemence, in a few days left no trace of sadness behind it. This happy (though not heroic) facility of character, is purely constitutional ; and while it operates graciously upon all the ills of life, while it quickly absorbs the tear, and dissipates the sigh, it neither interferes with the duties, nor chills the affections of existence : and though it would make no figure in tragedy or romance, it supports resignation, cheers adversity, and enhances those transient pleasures, whose flight is scarcely perceived, ere their place is supplied. This light volatile tone of character, this incapacity for durable impression, this sensibility to good, this transient susceptibility to evil, is after all perhaps the secret, sought by philosophers. The views of the Epicurean, and of the sceptic, well

understood, seem to meet at that point, which nature has made the basis of the French character; arriving by different routes to the same conclusion, that *true* sensibility is to feel; but not to be *overcome*.

A French woman has no hesitation in acknowledging, that the “*besoin de sentir*” is the first want of her existence; that a succession of pursuits is necessary to preserve the current of life, from that stagnation, which is the death of all vivid and gracious emotions. It appears, indeed, to be the peculiar endowment of the French temperament, to preserve, even to the last ebb of life, that unworn sensibility, that vigour, freshness, and facility of sensation, which are usually confined to the earliest periods of human existence; and which ordinarily lose their gloss and energy with the first and earliest impressions.

I had one day the good fortune to be seated at dinner next to the celebrated Humbolt, who observed, incidentally to the subject of conversation, that there was nothing he so much lamented as having arrived a few weeks too late at Paris, to make the acquaintance of Rousseau’s Mad. d’Hondetot. “I am told,” he continued, “that age held no influence

over that charming character ; and that she preserved, at eighty, the feelings and fancy of eighteen.”\*

To these observations Mons. Denon, who was present, added that the last time he had seen her (and it was not very long before her death), he could even then trace in her manner, her voice, her look, and her conversation, all that had bewitched Rousseau, and had fixed St. Lambert.

Mad. d’Houdetot is a splendid epitome of the female character in France, even though her intrinsic excellence is shadowed by the manners of the day, in which she lived. To those, whom she may have interested in the eloquent pages of Rousseau, where she appears a being, fanciful and ideal as his own *Julie*, it may not be displeasing to follow her through her own flower-strown path of real life. Rousseau has sketched, in his happiest manner, her first visit to the hermitage of Montmorenci, after being overturned near the mill of Clairvaux ; “*Sa chaussure mig-nonne*” exchanged for a pair of boots, “*perçant l’air d’eclats de rire*,” full of health, youth,

---

\* Mad. d’Houdetot died about the time the allies entered Paris.

spirits, grace, and gaiety; attacking with all these charms the sensibility of the philosopher, and awakening, in that hitherto *unawakened* heart, “ *l’amour dans toute son énergie, dans toutes ses fureurs.*”

It is curious to oppose to this picture of playful youth and frolic animation, Mad. d’Houdetot, in the same valley of Montinorenci, at a distance of sixty years, seated at her embroidery frame, surrounded by her grand-children; approaching the advanced age of ninety, and yet retaining all the vital warmth of her heart unchilled, all the bloom of her imagination untarnished; cultivating the kindest affections, and reciting, as if by inspiration, those charming effusions of taste and fancy,\* which her modesty would not

\* It was by stealth, that the grand-daughters of Mad. d’Houdetot took down the poetry which she composed and recited over her embroidery frame. She would never suffer them to be published, and I believe this is the first time that the two following little specimens of her talents have appeared in print.

*On the departure of St. Lambert for the army*

L’amant que j’adore,

Prêt à me quitter,

D’un instant encore

Voudroit profiter.



permit her to transcribe; and which she composed with the same facility, with which she created the flowers that sprung up from under her needle. It was thus that she was described to me, in those circles, from which she had been but recently withdrawn; and where every little word and act was still fresh in the memory of friendship.

When marriage was, in France, a mere affair of *convenance*, Sophie de la Briche, the daughter of a *fermier-général*, was forced into a union with the Comte d'Iloudetot, an officer of rank in the army, described in the traditions of the circles of Paris, as a good sort of gentleman, who lived much at court, and who had the honour to play “*gros jeu*” with Louis XV. By Rousseau he is termed a “*chicaneur très peu aimable*,

---

Félicité vaine !

Qu'on ne peut saisir,  
Trop près de la peine,  
Pour être un plaisir.

*On the last Duchesse de la Vallière.*

La nature, prudente et sage,  
Force le tems à respecter  
Le charme de ce beau visage,  
Qu'elle n'aurait pu répéter.

whom his wife could never have loved.” But the sensible, the susceptible Sophie, was destined to love somebody; and she became the rival and successor of Voltaire’s *Emilie du Châtelet*, by fixing the vagrant affections of the gallant, the chivalresque, the poetical *St. Lambert*.\*

The husband and the lover, were called at the same moment upon military service; and Sophie, recommended to the solace and care of Rousseau, by his friend *St. Lambert*, retired to her château in the valley of *Montmorenci*, in the neighbourhood of the hermitage of the philosopher of nature. “*Elle vint, je la vis;*” says Rousseau.---“*J’étois ivre d’amour, sans objet. Cette ivresse fascina mes yeux, cet objet se fixa sur elle, je vis ma Julie en Mad. d’Houdetot; bientôt je ne vis plus que Mad. d’H----*; mais revêtue de toutes les perfections, dont je venois d’orner l’idole de mon cœur. Pour m’achever, elle me parla de *St. Lambert*, en amante passionnée. Force contagieuse de l’amour! en l’écoutant, en me sen-

---

\* “*S’il faut pardonner quelque chose aux mœurs du siècle,*” says Rousseau, “*c’est sans doute un attachement, que sa durée épure, que ses effets honorent; et qui ne s’est cimenté, que par une estime réciproque.*”

*tant auprès d'elle, j'étois saisi d'un frémissement délicieux, que je n'avois jamais éprouvé auprès de personne."*

The defence however made by Rousseau, for a conduct nothing short of treachery, is not admitted by those now living, who have often heard Mad. d'Houdetot and St. Lambert speak of this singular epoch in the life of the philosopher. Rousseau began by soothing the regrets of Mad. d'H----, and by undermining her passion for his friend. He failed in both instances; and then sought to alarm her virtue, by painting an unlicensed love in such colours, as it was rarely represented to French women of that day. If the traditionary anecdotes, from which I have gleaned this recital, may be credited, he so far roused her sleeping conscience, as nearly to induce her to write a last farewell to the absent St. Lambert. But St. Lambert, though almost resigned, was always adored; and when Rousseau artfully pleaded his own passion, and to counteract his former doctrines, confessed that\* he was wrong

---

\* It was at this time that he wrote those passionate letters, of which he says: "*On a trouvé brûlantes les lettres*

in subduing a sensibility, that made the felicity of the possessor and of all who surrounded her; Mad. d'Houdetot, mistaking his meaning, joyfully exclaimed, "*Ah Dieu ! que vous me rendez la vie ! Je vais donc faire le bonheur de mon pauvre St. Lambert.*"

The long absent lover was received with rapture, and the treacherous friend, maddened by jealousy and apprehension, flew to Diderot to expose his griefs, and to demand his assistance. Diderot promised to reconcile all parties, and succeeded in his mediation; and Rousseau, jealous of his influence, swore eternal enmity to the mediator, and breathed it in a citation from the book of Ecclesiasticus, in his celebrated letter to d'Alembert.\*

---

*de la Julie. Ah Dieu, qu' auroit-on dit de cell's-ci ?*" When he demanded these letters, Mad. d'H—— said she had burned them. "*Non, non,*" he replied, "*jamais celle qui peut inspirer une pareille passion, n'aura le courage d'en brûler les preuves.*" A few years back, when Mad. d'Houdetot was asked, what she had *really* done with them, she answered with her usual *naïveté*, "I gave them all to St. Lambert."

\* The friends of Mad d'H—— express great indignation against Rousseau, for his conduct on this occasion. His accusation of Diderot, that he had betrayed the secret

The passion of Mad. d'Houdetot and St. Lambert became almost respectable, by its duration and constancy. But time, which told in favour of the mistress, turned all that was *gold* to *dross*, in the character of the lover. St. Lambert lost the virtues of youth, with its graces. In the course of a connexion, which lasted forty years, all that had once been fanciful, became capricious; all that was once wit, soured into satire; philosophy became cynicism, and vivacity petulance. Severe, and supercilious, St. Lambert treated the charming "*Doris*," of his "*Seasons*," with a peevish acrimony, which still retained in its harshness the exaction of an all-requiring love. If Mad. d'Houdetot gave play to that brilliant imagination, which accompanied her to her tomb, he was sure to observe; "*voilà qui est bien, cela fait effet.*" And when watching over his fragile health, she insisted upon more temperance than he was willing to endure, he named her, "*l'intendante de ses privations.*"

---

of his passion to his rival, was utterly without foundation. Mad. d'H—— shortly before her death declared, that all what appeared *passion* in J. Jacques was *imagination*: he *had no heart!*

Perhaps the most singular circumstance in this connexion, so strongly marked by the manners of the day, is, that Monsieur d'Houdetot was frequently the advocate of a lover, whose tyranny and caprice repeatedly procured his temporary dismissal from the presence of her, whom his insupportable humour had irritated and disgusted. Monsieur d'Houdetot was at last taken to that abode of felicity, said to be reserved as a recompense for such forbearing husbands, and the death of St. Lambert left this wife and mistress doubly widowed. It was then, that feelings of the tenderest association led her back to Montmorenci. The lovely valley had long changed its inhabitants: The Luxembourgs, the Rosseaus, and the d'Epinays, were no more. “*La bande noire*” had ravaged the palace of the prince, and laid low the hermitage of the philosopher. All was altered by time and circumstances; but the heart, the imagination of Mad. d'Houdetot were still the same. The throb of the one had not slackened in its beat, the warmth of the other had lost nothing of its glow; and at an age, when even memory fails, in others, feeling was still so ardent, and fancy so bril-

liant in this extraordinary person, that another St. Lambert was found in the solitudes of Montmorenci, to engross a friendship, innocent and tender as the fondness of childhood; and to which she alludes with a warmth, borrowed from her imagination, in the following lines :

Jeune, j'aimai ; ce tems de mon bel âge,  
Ce tems si court, comme un éclair s'enfuit ;  
Lorsque arriva la saison d'être sage,  
Encor j'aimai—la raison me le dit.  
Me voici vieille, et le plaisir s'envole ;  
Mais le bonheur ne me quitte aujourd'hui ;  
Car j'aime encore, et l'amour me console :  
Rien n'auroit pu me consoler de lui.

Madame d'Houdetot was eighty, when she produced these charming lines ; and the object of this new and tender friendship was, like St. Lambert, a resident in her dear valley of Montmorenci. The beautiful villa of Monsieur de S\*\*\* almost joined the château of his aged, but attractive mistress. Every morning brought him his billet and his nose-gay ; elegant and fresh, as the mind of the donor. When Monsieur de S. was asked, how he was affected by inspiring a passion he could not adequately return? he

replied: “ her charming conversation, her notes, and her flowers, had become *de douces habitudes*; and the first day that I missed them was certainly not the happiest of my life.\*

‘This good-natured sufferance, “ *de se laisser aimer*,” in a man not half the age of his mistress, is, I believe, the result of a temperament, formed by kindlier suns, and by more genial climes, than preside over the elements of the English character: for the *brutality* of Horace Walpole to the enamoured Mad. du Deffand stands severely opposed to the gentle indulgence of Monsieur de S\*\*\*. The taint of ridicule hangs, perhaps, on the conduct of both ladies: but the distance between the frigid egotism of Mad. du Deffand, and the generous affections of Mad. d’Houdetot, is immeasurable.†

---

\* I had the pleasure of being introduced to Monsieur S\*\*\*, during my residence at Paris. He is an Italian by birth, and was for some time at the head of the Cisalpine republic. His splendid fortune is devoted to the arts; of which he is a passionate lover, and an elegant judge. The taste and accomplishments of this gentleman merited the esteem and admiration, bestowed upon them by Mad. d’Houdetot.

*Additional Note.* † This little sketch of Mad. d’Hou-



It was the peculiar felicity of the latter to borrow, from the store of perennial feeling and exhaustless imagination, materials,

---

detot has been given partly from her connection with the literature of her day ; but more particularly as a proof of that position laid down in these pages, that the corruption and despotism, which prevailed in France before the Revolution, sapped every foundation of private morals, and perverted the happiest dispositions of a nation, most favoured by nature. Amidst the open and avowed profligacy of that day, the fidelity of forty years, to one exclusive lover was deemed a brilliant example ; and a connection, which, in the present times would cover its frail object with obloquy, was then even by moralists deemed respectable. While Mad. d'Houdetot was thus cited for her constancy to one lover, Louis the XVth held his *parc aux cerfs* ; and Mad. de Pompadour saw the first men in France at her feet. Frailty in women was not deemed a crime ; and profligacy in man was an open boast. The king, the church, and the state ; the Louis, the Bernis, and the Richelieu, gave a tone to vice, which none ventured to resist.

That an apology for this kind of argument should have been rendered necessary, in the present age, is alone explicable by the host of petty passions, by which all great questions are surrounded. It well becomes the habitual extenuators of high-born vice, the indignant opponents of all enquiry into elevated delinquency, to seize on such an opportunity for calumniating a female.

“ Felicia tempora, quæ te  
Moribus opponunt. Habeat jam Roma pudorem ;  
Tertius e cœlo cecidit Cato.”

which formed an ideal world around her, and which replaced before her eyes the actual scenes of life. There was a vein of genuine, unaffected romance, governing the course of her protracted existence, which experience *did not*, and time *could not* subdue.\*

It is a singular circumstance that this rival of the beautiful Mad. du Chatelet, this immortalized "*Doris*" of St. Lambert, this sole

---

\* The picture drawn of Mad. d'Houdetot's person, by Rousseau, is said to be done by a lover's hand ; but it is by no means very attractive. The *tout-ensemble*, however, including her manner and air, is quite charming. "*Mad. d'H—* approchoit de la trentaine, et n'étoit point belle. Son visage étoit marqué de la petite vérole, son teint manquoit de finesse, elle avoit la vue basse, et les yeux ronds ; mais elle avoit de grands cheveux noirs, naturellement bouclés, qui lui tomboient au jarret. Sa taille étoit mignonne, et elle mettait dans tous ses mouvements de la gaucherie et de la grace, tout-à-la fois. Elle avoit de l'esprit très naturel et très agréable ; la gaieté, l'étourderie, et la naïveté s'y marioient heureusement. Elle abondoit en saillies charmantes, qu'elle ne cherchoit point, et qui partoient quelquefois, malgré elle. Elle avoit plusieurs talens agréables, jouoit du clavecin, dansoit bien, faisoit d'assez jolis vers. Pour son caractère, il étoit angélique, la douceur d'âme en faisoit le fonds ; mais hors la prudence et la force, il rassembloit toutes les vertus."

object of all that Rousseau ever knew of passion, (at once his theme and his inspiration,) had not one feature, one tint or trait of personal attraction, which love could exaggerate into beauty, or imagination endow with a charm. The secret of her influence over the hearts of all, whom she sought to interest, was the ardour, the sensibility of her character, the tender, passionate cast of her manners, and the playfulness and redundancy of her all-creative imagination. Retaining, to the last hours of life, the freshness of the first, she inspired the feelings she preserved. Age grew young, as it listened to her, and youth forgot that she was old, when she spoke. Take her with her frailty and her merit, her faults and her virtues, France only could have produced such a woman ; in France only such a woman could have been appreciated. Mad. d'Houdetot, in the possession of all her faculties, and almost of all her graces, died at the age of eighty-eight, surrounded by her friends, and by her grand-children, the offspring of her only child, the present general, the Baron d'Houdetot.

I have to lament, in common with Monsieur Humbolt, that I arrived too late in Paris to have seen this interesting and extraordinary woman. But occasionally associating with those, who once had the happiness to live with her, I delightedly tracked the print of her steps, in those elegant circles, over which she had once presided. May I here be permitted to acknowledge the polite attentions I received, while in Paris, from the amiable sister of Mad. d'Houdetot, Mad. de la Briche, at whose Sunday evening assemblies I have so often found united, whatever Paris contained of rank, talent, beauty, and fashion. These evenings recalled to my imagination the little court, which surrounded her sister-in-law, Mad. d'Epinay, where statesmen and ministers mingled with the Diderots, Rousseaus, the Grims, and the Holbachs,\* in the salons of La Chevette.

---

\* I had the pleasure of knowing the amiable niece of Baron Holbach, Mad. R——. In talking over the pretended conspiracy of the Holbach *coterie*, about which Rousseau so extravagantly raved, this lady assured me that the first cause of his quarrel with her uncle, was a present of four dozen of singularly fine Champaign, which the baron sent to the philosopher ; an *insult* that Rousseau

I was speaking one day to a royalist lady on the many charming qualities of a mutual friend of ours, and on the excellent character of her husband. She replied with a shrug, *quant à lui, le bon homme, c'est une excellente personne ; cependant, ma chère, il ne remplit pas l'âme de sa charmante femme.*" This want of *having her soul occupied* by a husband, to whom she had been twenty-five years married, I thought rather an *exaction*, on the part of the "*charmante femme*," and I could not help observing, that, notwithstanding this singular refinement upon married happiness, I considered Monsieur et Mad<sup>me</sup> de \*\*\*\* an exemplary couple. My royalist friend agreed with me; adding, that it must be confessed "*l'amour conjugal*" was much more prevalent since the revolution than before; and that "*maintenant, il y a d'excellens ménages dans la France.*"

This is indeed an avowal universally made by the French of all parties; and more consideration is attached to this tie, when

---

never forgave. The little *pourparlers*, to which this gave rise, terminated in a rupture, out of which Rousseau's vivid but hypochondriacal imagination conjured all his long train of "*chimeras dire.*"

respectably maintained, and faithfully observed, than to any other domestic relation of society whatever.

It is now supreme *mauvais ton* to resort to the old worn-out jests levelled at men, who attend to their *own* wives, in preference to those of *others*; and indeed, I observed, in all public societies, and in the many and various entertainments given at court, on the marriage of the *Duc de Berri*, that the women, and particularly the *young women*, were always accompanied by their husbands. It would be difficult to ascertain the precise *minimum* of sentiment, which goes to make up the sum of married happiness in France, and to draw a scale of comparison between the stock of conjugal affection which exists in that country, and in England. England, however, has some *good old habits* in her favour, invariably connected with the laws and government of a free nation, but which, perhaps, already begin to survive their source and origin; while in France, some *taint* of the *original sin* of despotism is still to be found operating even on private society. The play given to natural feelings for twenty-five years back, may not even yet have

quite righted those errors, that arose out of institutes and habits, which the abuses of many centuries contributed to form, to perpetuate, and to excuse.

Married life has always been most respectable and most sacred, under free governments; while under the influence of political despotism, women, treated either as *slaves* or as *sultanas*, are never *wives*. It is thus that they once reigned in France, by an *undue* influence, subversive of all their natural virtues. It is thus that they still serve in the east, with that corrupt depravation both of morals and intellect, which inevitably re-acts upon their tyrants---and vindicates insulted nature.

As it is *not* the fashion, in France, to believe that the sole duty and object of “*heaven’s last, best gift*,” is to

“Suckle fools, and chronicle small beer,”

women are there, frequently the *friends* of their husbands; even when ties, more passionate and tender than those of friendship, cease to exist. A Frenchman seeking a rational companion in the wife, who perhaps never was his mistress, frequently finds in

her society that frankness, pleasantry, information, and even GOOD FELLOWSHIP (if I may use the expression), which possesses a charm too often neglected in married life. How true French women however *can be*, in feeling and in sympathy, to their husbands, has been painfully evinced, during the horrors of the revolution, the struggles of twenty-five years' emigration, and, above all, during the political vicissitudes and conflicts in France, which have occurred since the return of the Bourbons.\*

The distracted and devoted, wives, who were seen almost *weekly* by sympathizing multitudes, in the gallery of the royal chapel of the Tuileries, pleading at the feet of the king, for the lives of their brave, but con-

---

\* Some of these heart-rending scenes took place during my residence in France, and even while I was present, in the *chapelle royale*; but I had not the courage to witness them. Mad. d'Angoulême is said to have pulled her gown out of the convulsive grasp of one of these *wretched suppliants*, with such force, as to leave a piece of the royal drapery behind her. It is to this *strength* of feeling in her royal highness, which none of her "*sex's weakness*" has yet subdued, that the *ultras* allude, when they exclaim: "*Madame a beaucoup de caractère. Elle joue un grand rôle!!*"



demned husbands, afforded such pictures of conjugal devotion, and exquisite sensibility, as few countries could rival, and *none* surpass.

The young and unfortunate Mad. La Bèdoyere, dying of a broken heart, for him, whom her tears and supplications could not save ;---the struggles, the exertions, the almost manly efforts of Mad. Ney ;---the ready self-immolation of Madame La Valette,\*

\* Madame la Valette has the character of being one of the most virtuous and excellent women in France. It was on the failure of her affecting applications to the king, for the life of her husband, that the following song was made at Paris :

*Complainte de la Valette.*

La Valette est condamné,  
 Tout le peuple est consterné,  
 Et tout bas chacun répète :  
     La Valette. (*bis*)  
 Pauvre la Valette.

Le Roi, pour se régaler,  
 Voulait le faire étrangler,  
 Et chaque Bourbon répète :  
     La Valette. (*bis*)  
 Pitié la Valette.

who knew not, and feared not, the results of the task she had undertaken ; and the sacrifices of Mad. Bertrand, who so willingly gave up a world, where she still reigned

---

Sa femme, pour le sauver,  
A leurs pieds court se jeter,  
Ils repoussent sa requête,  
La Valette. (*bis*)  
Pauvre la Valette.

Le Roi lui dit, en courroux,  
Madame, retirez-vous,  
Faut que justice soit faite,  
La Valette. (*bis*)  
Péris la Valette.

Elle va dans la prison,  
Lui prêter son cotillon,  
Son vitchoura, sa cornette,  
La Valette (*bis*)  
Sauve la Valette.

Pour leur remettre l'esprit,  
Le bon la Valette prit  
De la poudre d'escampette,  
La Valette. (*bis*)  
Sauve la Valette.

La d'Angoulême en rougit,  
Le comte d'Artois frémit,  
Le roi n'a pas sa braie nette,  
La Valette. (*bis*)  
Vive la Valette.

supreme in the *unproscribable* influence of fashion and beauty, to follow her brave husband into a voluntary and dreary exile : these are splendid instances of conjugal virtue, among a host of other examples, less distinguished by the rank of the parties, but not less deserving of publicity and praise. It is the fashion, however, for modern travellers, and the writers of modern travels, to declaim against the fidelity of French wives, to boast of their own *bonnes-fortunes*, and to

“ Talk of beauties, which they never saw,  
And fancy raptures, that they never knew.”

But limited in their experience by the difficulty, which *all strangers*, and particularly *British strangers*, find of obtaining admittance into the interior of private society and domestic life in France, they have drawn their pictures of the *actual* state of French society, and their character of its women, from such originals as were presented to their observations in the courts of the *Palais Royal*, or in the bad novels of the days of *Louis XV.*

With the exception of a few men of very high rank, and of those connected with the

English government, and holding ministerial or official situations, I never met *in any circle or society whatever, in Paris*, a single subject of the British dominions.\*

---

The progress of general illumination must always forward the interests of morality. Knowledge, once confined in France to a certain class,† and considered as an *état*, is now universally diffused, and felt to operate upon all the ties of social life. Husbands no longer boast the philosophy of the Riche-

---

\* It is needless to make exceptions, in favour of such men as Playfair or Davy, who belong to all countries and ages, and who, in *scientific* France, were naturally received with that deference and respect, due to their genius and to the benefits they have conferred on their species. The genuine simplicity of professor Playfair's manners was a subject of general admiration, to all who had the happiness of being known to him, at Paris.

† Anne Duc de Montmorenci, high constable of France, defending himself against the imputation of having given his authority to a libel against the Prince de Condé, declared that his secretary must have deceived him, by changing one paper for another—"ce qui étoit d'autant plus oisé," said this distinguished nobleman, "que je ne sais ni lire, ni écrire!!!"

lieus and des Beauzées ; while wives are so coquettish, as occasionally

“ *D'aimer jusqu'à leurs Maris.*”

Some French women expressed to me no little indignation at its being supposed, that French husbands did not exert a decided authority in their own families ; as Russian brides exhibit the cane, with which they endow their husbands on the wedding-day, for the purpose of domestic correction.

“ *Les Anglais se trompent fort,*” said the charming Madame de C\*\* C\*\*\*s to me one day, “ *s'ils croient que les Français ne savent aussi se faire obéir. Il y en a beaucoup, qui entendent cela à merveille ; mais je pense que c'est moins à la mode en France, qu'en Angleterre. D'ailleurs, ma chère, je suis forcée de convenir qu'il manque à nos maris une chose fort essentielle au bonheur. C'est de pouvoir nous mettre une corde au cou, et nous conduire au marché, quand ils sont de mauvaise humeur !*”

---

\* The pleasantries and witticisms of the famous Duc de Richelieu, on the gallantries of his dutchess, are to be found in every encyclopædia of wit. The grammatical precision of the celebrated academician, Monsieur de Beauzée, at the moment he made a discovery fatal to his honour and conjugal happiness, is too well known to need citation.

To this custom of selling wives with hal-  
ters round their necks, among the lower  
classes in England, the French make con-  
stant allusions. There is nothing places our  
own national prejudices in so strong a light,  
as thus coming in contact with the national  
prejudices of others. In England, all French  
husbands are considered as “*des messieurs  
commodes*.” In France, all English husbands  
are frequently distinguished by the epithet  
“*des brutaux*.”

“Voilà,” said a French lady, with whom  
I was driving in the Champs Elysées, “voilà,  
*Miladi* \* \* \* \* et son *brutal*,” pointing to  
an English couple not celebrated for their  
conjugal felicity. Of the frequency of di-  
vorses in England, of their publicity, which  
reflects the mother’s shame on her innocent  
offspring, of the indecent exposure of the  
trials, where every respect for manners is  
brutally violated, and of the *pecuniary* remu-  
neration, accepted by the injured husband,  
the French speak with horror and contempt;  
particularly as women, whose character is no  
longer equivocal, are received in the English  
circles of Paris, by persons of the highest  
rank.

“ Your divorces,” said a French lady to me, “ seem not to proceed, in general, from any very fine or delicate sense of honour ; but to be as much a matter *de convenance* between the parties, as marriages formerly were among us.” Legal divorces are rare in France ; formal and eternal separations, made privately by the parties, are more general ; and when love survives, in one object, the honour and fidelity of the other, measures of greater violence are sometimes adopted, more consonant to the impetuous character of a people, whose passions are rather *quick*, than *deep-seated* ; and who frequently act upon impulse, in a manner which even a momentary reflection would disclaim.

During my residence in Paris, a young man of condition destroyed himself, on having obtained proofs of his wife’s frailty. A few weeks afterwards, a gentleman shot himself through the head, in the church-yard de Vaugirard, not because his wife was *faithless* ; but (as he declared, in a written paper found in his pocket) because she was *insensible* to his own passion.

A more interesting case of conjugal suicide was related to me, while I was travelling

through Normandy. A Mons. C—, whose beautiful seat I saw near Rouen, had destroyed himself, a few months before, on the tomb of his deceased wife. She had inspired this romantic husband with the most ardent passion ; and died in the prime of her beauty, and of her youth, of a rapid decline. Mons. C— struggled in vain against the despondency her loss occasioned. The unequal conflict between reason and feeling finally decided him on the desperate step, he had long meditated. He devoted some weeks to the arrangement of his affairs (for he was a rich manufacturer of cloth) ; and having settled his large property on his infant children, whom he committed to the guardianship of his brothers, he put a period to his existence ; assigning no reason for this act of desperation, but his total inability to enjoy life, after having lost her, who had so long made it precious to him.

On the subject of conjugal virtue in France, I have an authority, which it may not be here inappropriate to cite, as being of a less sombre nature. Whoever has visited the memorable and beautiful village of Chantilly,



may, perhaps, have noticed the handsome Mad. de Pinte Amelot, and her gallant husband, the *aubergistes* of the *hôtel de Bourbon Condé*. Mad. Pinte, with her large blue eyes, and “*coëffure à la Chinoise* ;” and Monsieur, with his loose military *rédingote*, and his black silk cap, worn on one side, “*d’un air gaillard*,” are characters to put even the sulky *Smellfungus* into a good humour ; and to create a new page of sentimental observation, in the journal of *Tristram*.

I was one morning standing at the door of “*l’hôtel de Bourbon Condé*,” conversing with the intelligent M. Pinte Amelot (who spent his day in parading before his inn, and in talking to the passengers), when the appearance of the charming Mad. Pinte, at one of the windows, gave rise, on my part, to some complimentary observations on her beauty.

“*Ah, Madame*,” observed her husband, “*elle est aussi bonne que belle ; d’ailleurs c’est un garçon infiniment spirituel, que ma femme*.”

I now complimented *him*, upon his conjugal admiration ; adding, that “ I had always heard there was very little ‘*amour*

*conjugal*,' in France; but that he had undeceived me."

"*Comment donc, sacre !*" he replied in a passion. "No conjugal love in France? *En tous tems, Madame*, we have been famous for our conjugal virtues: I could cite you a thousand examples myself: *moi, qui vous parle.*"

I asked him for *one, par exemple*: "*Tenez, Madame,*" said Mons. Pinte, counting on his fingers, "*voilà notre Héloïse et Abélard; et puis, notre Pyrame et Thisbé; voilà, que voulez-vous, Madame?*"

Thus backed by M. Pinte Amelot, and "*Pyrame and Thisbé,*" it is, perhaps, unnecessary to cite another instance, in favour of the prevalence of conjugal love, *de tout tems, en France.*

While married life, in France, has evidently gained by the change, which has been effected in the manners and habits of the country; gallantry in the modern acceptation of the term, is, in its influence and extent, much the same as in England. The result of idleness and vanity, it is inevitably more prevalent in those elevated circles, where rank and opulence exclude occupation, and

leave the imagination and the passions open to any engagement, that comes as a resource, affords an obstacle, or awaken an emotion.

As long as the frailties of a French woman of fashion are '*peccati celati*;' as long as she lives upon good terms with her husband; and does the honours of his house, she has the same latitude and the same reception in society, as is obtained by women similarly situated in England; where, like the Spartan boy, she is punished not for her *crime*, but for *its discovery*. There, a divorce only marks the line between *reputation*, and its *loss*: society will not *take hints*, and a woman must *publicly advertise her fault*, before she can obtain credit for having committed it.

The high circles of Paris are to the full as indulgent as those of London. *Lovers understood*, are not *paramours convicted*; and as long as a woman does not make an *esclandre*; as long as she is decent and circumspect, and "assumes the virtue which she has not," she holds her place in society, and continues to be, not indeed *respected*, but *received*. Gallantry, however, in France, is no longer that cold system of heartless egotism and pro-

fligacy, which avowedly took as its governing maxim, that

“ L’objet quitté, ne fut que *prévenu*,”

which coldly calculated the *probable duration*\* of a passion; and which, systematic in its ardour, as in its cruelty, soon changed an idol into a victim; and followed up the jargon of affected devotion, with the language of opprobrium and disgust.†

But while few of those “*cupidons déchainés*,” who made gallantry the business, end, and object of their lives, are now to be

\* When one of the *complaisantes* of Louis XV. proposed to him a lady of rank, as successor to Mad. De Pompadour, after a moment’s consideration, he replied, “*Non, elle couteroit trop à renvoyer.*”

† The frail and fair Countess de Guebriant sent a billet to the Duc de Richelieu, to let him know she awaited him, by appointment, near the “*cour des cuisines*,” in the *palais-royal*. He replied, “*Restez-y, et charmez les marmitons, pour lesquels vous êtes faite. Adieu, mon ange !!!*” Cruelty and contempt were the usual *poursuivans* of love and devotion, in that school of French gallantry, which began towards the middle of the reign of Louis XIV.; and was founded on a very different sentiment, from that elevated and romantic feeling, which declined, together with the spirit of the French nobility, after the wild but gallant conflicts of the *Fronde*.

found, let loose upon society in France; a sort of “*galanterie banale*” still prevails, which seems inseparable from the French temperament. Men still offer as a duty, that assistance, homage, and respect, which the women seem to take, as a right. And if, in these *anti-chivalric* times, there yet remains a spot, where man seems a *Preux* by nature, and woman may be a “*queen for life*,” it is unquestionably France. Even age, *there*, does not inevitably dismiss one sex from the lists of admiration, nor release the other from the obligations of attention and respect. “*Avoir un charme jusques dans les rides*,” is not confined to those forms, which time has spared, and over whose waning charms love still sheds the reflection of his departed light. Even *mind*, there, partakes of the attraction of *sex*; and the brilliant fancy and inextinguishable sensibility of Madame D’Houdetot, at seventy, awakened an admiration, as genuine and as lively, as the personal charms of Ninon de l’Enclos obtained at three-score.

I know not whether it may be deemed fatal, or serviceable to morality, that the spirit of slander meets no encouragement in French society, and that a tendency to defamation is

considered an irrefragable proof of ill-breeding, and vulgar origin. This seeming leniency to the faults of others, does not wholly spring from an indulgence, indiscriminate in its views of *good* and *evil*. It arises, to a certain degree, from a fulness of mind, a copiousness and fluency of conversation, that is never driven by its own barrenness to the discussion of subjects, merely and invariably of a personal and private nature. Few are so idle, so ignorant, or so shallow, as to be indebted to the frailties of their neighbours, or their friends, for their sole topic of conversation and remark.

There is, indeed, on this point a circumstance which leaves the *mere* stranger in Parisian society liable to imposition; for few like to “*throw the first stone*;” and “*Je ne la connais pas*,” is the usual reply, to any enquiries, made on the subject of such females, who, though not of the family “*de la pruderie*,” still hold their precarious place in society, by a decency and propriety of conduct, which lays suspicion at rest.

The innumerable sets, circles, and parties, into which the immense mass of Parisian society is broken up, does not admit of that

universal exposure of character and conduct, which, in a smaller sphere of action, or where society is more blended, places every member of the community before the mirror of general observation. None but characters of eminence and celebrity can be brought before the tribunal of public opinion in Paris, and receive the indelible marks of infamy, or the more perishable tribute of high consideration. To whatever extent domestic virtue and conjugal fidelity may be carried, in France, by the dissemination of useful knowledge, and the progress of moral philosophy, it is extremely difficult to come at any direct proofs of their violation. For besides that refinement and reserve, which decline the slanderous communications of the idle and the malignant, the long-established laws of decency, with that conventional idea of *bienséance*, so implicitly obeyed, govern imperiously the forms of French society. It may be that, in strict observance of its dictates, more virtue is *affected*, than is *practised*; yet no vain boast is ever made of a vice, which, though fashion may sanction, morality condemns; and those, who err “*by stealth*,” have the good taste to “*blush, to find it fame*.”

It is indeed curious to observe the severe prudence, united to the childish volatility of this paradoxical people; whose character and government seem so long to have been at variance, as to have mutually re-acted upon each other, and reconciled extremes almost irreconcilable: the one always leading by its dispassionate and amiable elements towards *that* virtue, which the other endeavoured to obliterate by slavery and corruption. The long-inculcated habits of a base morality upon this particular point, may still have left much of their taint behind them; and time has not been allowed, for the severer principles, which freedom nourishes, to take root; but the extensive propriety, which even the most vicious respect, and the most degraded do not violate, affords sufficient proof of the natural predisposition of the French temperament, for the cultivation of moral feelings.

In the lowest place of public amusement, in the most mixed and motley assemblies, all is decency and seeming propriety. No look shocks the eye, no word offends the ear of modesty and innocence. Vice is never rendered dangerous, by example; nor are its



allurements familiarized to the mind of youth, by the publicity of its exhibitions. This propriety of exterior, this moral decency in manners, has been made a subject of accusation against the French, by recent travellers; who demonstrate their patriotism, by extolling even the licentiousness, which, in England, openly presenting itself to public observance, marks by very obvious limits the line between vice and virtue. But England, the first country in the world, because still the *freest*, will disdain this parasitical eulogium on all that is faulty in her social institutions; and a country which, at this moment, is struggling equally against the insidious influence of *private* and *public corruption*, will surely not rank those among her friends, who would intoxicate her with an incense of indiscriminate praise; and confounding her virtues and her faults, lull her into that vain-glorious security, which has been, in all states, the sure forerunner of slavery and degradation.

It is owing to the extreme *propriety* and even *purity* of manners, preserved in all public places, in France, that young females of every rank and condition, well brought

up, may remain ignorant as far as their own observation goes, that there *does* exist a wretched portion of their sex, who eat the bread of shame, and live by self-degradation. But no woman of any rank or age, who has only *once* visited a *public place* in England, can escape becoming the involuntary witness of the most unblushing vice, of the most brutal indecency.

This Clinical mode of study in morals, formally recommended to the innocent and the inexperienced; this purposely leading the sane and the vigorous to the bedside of disease and of death; this guarding and preserving health, by exposing it to the observation and infection of malady; is a singular paradox in moral doctrine. But surely, when in the accidents of public society chance places vice within the sphere of virtue, if the former borrows the veil of decency, in respectful deference to the latter, and shame, blushing and awe-struck, still survives the loss of its companion innocence, the cause of moral good is still supported, honoured, and preserved.

While this decency of exterior extends itself to all the forms of public association,

it is carried to an excess in private society, which sometimes banishes ease, and induces formality. There exists no such mode of gratifying *vanity*, without risking *feeling*, as is practised with us, under the generic name of *flirting*. One of those honest, unmeaning, "*flirtations*," carried on in the corner of every drawing-room, where an English assembly is held, or pursued on the staircase, or doorway, to the great annoyance of all persons, not particularly interested in the alliance, would shock an elegant society in Paris, beyond all power of endurance. In affairs of the heart, French women know no medium between love and indifference. They may have *male friends*, but they have no *flirts*; and if they have a lover, they would be as cautious of distinguishing the fortunate being in public society, by any marked preference, as an Englishman of fashion would be of making love to his own wife, before company. Speaking on this subject to a very clever and very witty French woman, Mad. E \* \* \* d, she observed respecting the decency, even of the women most notably gallant, "*Les Françaises sont les seules femmes peut-être, à qui il soit permis d'avoir des torts;*

*car elles seules s'attachent à leurs devoirs et à la décence, quand même elles ont une vertu de moins !*"

The public attentions paid by Englishmen, of the most distinguished rank, to women of public and notorious characters in Paris, and their introduction of such persons into the private circles of society, excited universal indignation and contempt. It was in vain to talk to the French of English morality, while English women were seen to associate with, and even to pay respectful homage to some modern *Lais* of the day, whose fashion rather than her talent had become her passport into society.

No public women whatever are admitted into good French company. Once "*sur les planches*," once upon the boards, whether as actress or as singer, they can never be received by women of character and condition; except in their professional capacity, when they are engaged and paid, "*pour donner une scène*," on some particular evening; to sing their *bravura* on the night of a private concert. The *prima Donna* of the opera is there never the *prima Donna* of private society. The well-known anecdote of some

English dutchesses holding the shawl of the late presiding deity of the opera house, in London, till she was at leisure to put it on, excited infinite mirth in an assembly of French ladies, where it was related in my presence.

The imitative talents have indeed no false appreciation in France; they rank not *before*, but *after* original genius. While, in our circles, a fashionable actor, or first-rate singer, would be received with a more marked distinction, than an Otway, or a Cimarosa; in France the author and the composer would hold a place in public estimation, and in private company, which the actor and the singer could never hope to attain. It is depressing to the feelings of high-minded and sensitive genius thus to receive, in homely obscurity, its scanty remuneration; and neglected by its contemporaries, to live only for that future day, which will come too late, to awaken the gracious emotion arising from *conscious merit*, *crowned by success*; while the imitative talents, which owe their being to its labours, and derive their materials from its imagination, are courted, feasted, and paid with an un-

sparing prodigality. Some of the best poets, in England, are at this moment struggling with a “bare sufficiency,” far from those circles, which their talents were calculated to irradiate and delight; while Italian singers have recently returned to their own country, to purchase principalities, and English actors are driven to extravagant excesses, by the superabundance of suddenly-gotten wealth; which they know not how worthily to employ, or prudently to accumulate. In this instance, they certainly “manage these matters better in France.”

---

“*Le style a un sexe,*” says Marivaux, “*et on reconnoitroit une femme à une phrase.*” This observation is perfectly applicable to his own countrywomen. There is in *their* language, style, and phraseology, something extremely *sexual*; a *finesse*, a delicacy, a tact, a sort of instinctive appropriation of every word to its subject, which the fine perception and flexibility of woman’s peculiar structure can perhaps alone originate. The verbal criticisms of a French woman on literary productions, even her personal observations,

are delivered with a pointed and well-turned elegance, which makes every sentence an epigram: on subjects of mere sentiment, on the development of a feeling, or the analysis of a passion, they speak with a precision and a facility, which, if sometimes deficient in originality, are always directed by taste, and expressed with terseness.

Perhaps this talent, or acquirement (and I believe it is partly both), is sometimes carried to an extent that savours of study, and approaches to affectation; even though "*sentir le bel esprit*," is an imputation, which the most confirmed *précieuse* is now anxious to avoid. Much however must be allowed to the difference of *national manner*; and the manner of the *most natural* French woman *must* carry with it, to English judgment in its first impression, the taint of affectation. Until experience correct the error, her motions, her gestures, her air, all seem characterised by motive, and rather calculated, than involuntary. The sudden lighting-up of her countenance, when addressed, gives her, according to our phlegmatic standard of inexpressive quietude, the semblance "of calling-up," like *Lady Pentweezle*, "a look,

for the occasion." All this, however, is mere natural mobility, aided by habit and confirmed by fashion. And though it is impossible not to see, that there still remain in society many of those "*façonnières*," whose motions go "*par ressort*," who, like Moliere's *Climène*, make "*la mouë, pour montrer une petite bouche; et roulent les yeux, pour les faire paroître grands*;" yet, generally speaking, all palpable affectation is, in good society, deemed full as vulgar and as ridiculous, as it is in England; while whatever strikes as original or *naïve*, in the manner of the women of other countries, obtains the tribute of unqualified and liberal approbation.

Female education appeared to me much less systematic, and less professional, than with us; attended with infinitely less labour, and less pursued for purposes of exhibition. Music seems an acquirement, adopted only by natural taste and superior talent. It makes no *indispensible branch* of education; and its theory is even sometimes studied, where its practice is neglected. While pretension is thus universally discountenanced, the unsuspecting visitor, who enters the salon, in search of the higher enjoyments of



social intercourse, is never *taken in*, by a series of *early preludes*, and “*useful grounds*,” performed by *amateur débutantes*; nor is a feigned admiration volunteered or extorted, with all the corollary observations on new systems, or the merit and qualifications of the various fashionable and rival professors of the day. I did not indeed hear much *amateur* music in Paris; but what I did hear, was exquisite and finished. One of the finest performers on the piano-forte, in Europe, is a young French lady of fashion, now resident in Paris; the charm of every circle, the soul of every society, in which she appears; yet I believe there are few, who would forego her conversation, for her music; or who would not find her wit and pleasantry “*still sweeter than her song.*”\*

Among the arts most pursued in the range of female education, *painting* seems the most prevalent. It is cultivated by women of the first rank with great success.† The liberal

---

\* Mademoiselle d’Alpay, the young and devoted friend and companion of the Princess de Craon; known to some of the first persons in England, by the exertion of her talents and virtues, during a painful emigration.

† It is impossible to touch on the subject of female

and splendid exhibitions of the best efforts of the greatest masters, both of the modern and ancient schools, which, until within the last two years, were open to the French public, afforded unparalleled opportunities for the cultivation of taste and the formation of judgment; and native talent was called forth and assisted by the multiplicity of models and the facility of pursuit, which every where presented themselves.

Still, however, in France, as every where, the arts are most indebted to those, who *live by professing them*. The best music is to be had, for money: the best pictures are those, which may be bought: the universal passion

---

accomplishments, in France, without noticing the three charming daughters of the late celebrated M. Esmenard. These very young ladies speak French, English, and Spanish, with equal elegance and fluency, and are first-rate musicians. Mad. Inis Esmenard, notwithstanding her extreme youth, has already obtained some celebrity for her exquisite talents in miniature-painting, and ranks high among the distinguished pupils of her master, Isabey. By the recent changes in the government, the members of this most accomplished family have suffered much in their circumstances, and the daughter of an ex-minister now seeks resources of subsistence in a talent acquired from taste, for the purposes of amusement.

of the nation for intellectual and literary pursuit, directs the views of female education more particularly to the cultivation of mind, than to the imitative talents. Reading and conversation are their resource and their habit; and if they furnish society with fewer pretending and inferior artists, they enrich it with a proportionate number of well-informed and elegant gentlewomen.

It was observed by the patriarch of *Ferney*, in one of his cynical fits, that “*les Parisiens parlent bien leur langue, parce qu’ils n’en savent point d’autres.*” If he had said, “*parlent point d’autres,*” the observation would be better applied to the French of the present day. The French organ seems to lend itself with great difficulty to the formation of sounds, not strictly vernacular. I knew many women in Paris, who could read English, and who had read all our classical authors; yet I was acquainted with but three, who could speak it to be understood; and two of those ladies had been in England.

To understand, how totally different the *rythmus* of a language is from its appearance to the eye, it is necessary to hear it spoken by a foreigner, who never heard it pronounced

by others. The efforts occasionally made by some of my fair Parisian friends, to address me in English, resembled very much the attempts at enunciation of the pupils of the Abbé Sicard, in his seminary for the dumb and deaf. The words seemed *blotted out*, after a little convulsive struggle in the throat, as Harlequin is made to articulate, in the Italian comedy, by a violent thump given him on the back. A very pleasant person, after an ineffectual contest with some guttural sounds of *th* and *ph*, exclaimed: “*Ah ! ma chère, c’est inutile ; ce vilain Anglais me reste toujours au gosier.*”\*

I never, however, found myself inclined to smile at their difficulties and their mistakes, that their own polite and kind indulgence to the ludicrous errors, which they hear every day made in their own polished language, did not give me some very compunctious “visitings of conscience.” The pains they take to *translate* a *foreigner* to *himself*, to clear up the confusion of his

---

\* I have often been much amused, by hearing French ladies discuss the merits of the style of Robertson, Hume, Gibbon, and Johnson.

ideas, in the entanglement between two languages, are equally indefatigable and amiable ; and they have a peculiar expertness at this sort of verbal construing, which places their habitual good-nature in strong relief. I remember a friend of mine explaining to the celebrated Mad de V\*\*te, the influence, which the voice of the law in England held over the people ; which, he observed, was sure to enforce obedience even to its most inferior officers. To illustrate this position, he chose a riotous assemblage of the lower orders, suddenly dispersed by the *constable* of the parish. “ *Oui, madame,*” he repeated, “ *dispersé par le connétable.*”

The good sense of Mad. de V---- seemed rather to revolt at the *connétable's* interfering upon such occasions ; and she began to sound the mistake by, “ *Comment donc, monsieur, vous avez aussi un grand connétable ? Vous avez donc aussi vos Annes de Montmorenci ?*” My English friend, provoked at her dulness, endeavoured to explain to her, that nothing could be less like the great Anne de Montmorenci, than the worthy compeers of Monsieur Townsend and Co. “ *Enfin madame,*” he added, “ *un high constable, c'est un alguazil,*”

“ *Ah, seigneur dieu ! monsieur,*” replied Mad. de V----, “ *qu’est-ce que vous venez donc à me dire ? Vous avez des Alguazils !---vous autres fiers républicains !*” My English friend was now completely posed, until Mad. de V---- undertook to translate for him, and with the customary “ *tenex, vous allez voir,*” found a parallel for the *grands constables* of England, in some of the subaltern departments of the French police.

It is a very singular circumstance, that the return of the French emigrants from England, after a twenty-five years’ residence in that country, has absolutely added nothing to the stock of acquirements, in the English language or literature. Of the numbers whom I met in society, who had resided in England, I could never get one to speak to me in English ; with the exception of the Prince Louis de la Trimouille, and the Prince de Beauveau. The usual reply was, upon all occasions, “ *J’entends l’Anglais, mais je ne le parle pas.*”

I was at court the night that Mrs. Gallatin, the American ambassadress, was presented to the Duchesse d’Angoulême, who addressed her in French. Being informed that Mrs. G.

did not speak French, her royal highness expressed her regret to Mr. Gallatin, that she could not address his lady in English, as *she could not speak that language*. Madame d'Angoulême was received under the protection of England, while yet almost a child, and lived there twenty years. The emigrant nobility, indeed, seem to have stopt short with English literature, as with every thing else, at the reign of Louis XV. They still talk with delight of the "*Seasons of Monsieur Tonson*," and enquire with *unabated* friendship after "*Monsieur Yong, et les charmantes nuits*." A hundred times I have been offered a pinch of snuff and a short criticism together, on English poesy; beginning with, "*Ah, madame, vous avez des poètes charmants, charmants! Votre Tonson, par exemple; et vos romans, madame, votre "Betsi Tatless," mais c'est un bijou, que votre Betsi Tatless! pour ne rien dire de la divine Clarisse.*"\*

---

\* I tried, in vain, on my return to England, to procure "*Betsey Thoughtless*," the first *genuine* novel, I believe, written in the English language; that I might myself judge of the merits of a work, so highly estimated by some of my French friends.

Italian and German are more spoken in France than English, though not more read ; and all the continental languages enter more into the system of education in France, since the revolution, than they ever did at any period before that event. The reason is obvious ; France for a time held the same place in Europe, which Rome had once held in the then known world ; and persons of all nations were found filling the public places, and congregations, in the private circles of its capital.

It may be said of a French woman, what the King of Prussia said of himself: “ *Lorsque je suis bien comprimé j’ai une ressource admirable.*” For the full development of the character and faculties, a French woman must be placed under the influence of circumstances of great emergency. She makes a much better *heroine* than a *housewife* ; and is more adequate to encounter dangers and difficulties, which call for exertion, and bring great recompense, than to meet the bustling duties of every-day-life, which require only small sacrifices, but demand perpetual efforts. There is a sort of real or affected helplessness about French women, of the higher classes,



which renders them very dependant upon their domestics ; and a *femme-de-chambre*, or *maître-d'hôtel*, has the same superintendence in a French family, as in England would devolve on its mistress : except she was of the very highest class, and at the head of an establishment, quite unknown in France. No woman of the lowest description meddles with the mysteries of dress-making ; their needle-work is all ornamental ; and I have overheard coarse, vulgar persons in shops and public places talk of their *couturières*, their *murchandes de modes*, and their *femmes-de-chambre*, who had themselves by no means so respectable an appearance, as a second-rate housemaid in the family of an English gentleman.

The ability and shrewdness of a French woman, of condition, seem indeed confined to the penetration of character, the development of passions, and to subjects of taste and abstraction. She rarely applies the full force of her powers to the coarser business of life. She is unequal to those economical calculations, by which English thrift balances means, and regulates expenses. In the distribution of pecuniary matters, the

*femme comme il faut*, the woman of fashion, is, generally speaking, an amiable, but thoughtless child. She gratifies her feelings and her propensities with careless promptitude; gives her money to the relief of misery, or to the demands of her milliner, with unreflecting readiness; and lays out her income in dress and charity, trinkets and amusements, with prodigal simplicity. I never heard a French woman say any thing was *dear*; and when I have often thought to astonish them, by the exorbitant charges of a tradesman, who I supposed had made me pay "*en dame Anglaise*," they have always re-assured me with "*mais, ce n'est pas cher*."

Among the middle classes, however, and most particularly among that large class of well-born persons, whom a long train of political vicissitudes have practised in all the extremes of wealth and of indigence, I am told the most rigid economy is united to that decency of appearance, which almost amounts to elegance. By this *savoir faire* of the female heads of families, many are comfortably supported in Paris, and are enabled to enjoy the society of a select circle, on an

income, which would scarcely maintain an individual, in a country town in England.

Economy, thus thoroughly understood, is still further promoted by the consolidation of families : for the breaking up and dividing the common resources, by a multiplication of separate establishments, is an event of very considerable rarity. This blessed union of family interests and of family affections, which unites so many generations under one roof, and blends the views of the aged and the young, is one of the happiest aspects, in which the character and habits of the nation present themselves. The churlish separation of interests, which with us so soon loosens the ties of parental and filial tenderness, which makes the aspiring son pant for that majority, which gives him an independent establishment, and renders the zealous father the suspicious tenant of his impatient heir, is wholly unknown in France. Their domestic life is purely patriarchal ; every family consists of three or four generations ; all gathered under the same roof, all assembling at the same hearth, and ranging round the same table. That cheeriness of spirit, that even

flow of temper, which “ opens in each *heart a little heaven*,” preserves an harmony and order in the social government of every *ménage*; which the morbid humours and bilious affections, engendered by less genial climes and temperaments, so frequently disturb.

Among the many charming family pictures, which so often gratified my heart and imagination, by the exhibition of united affections, may I be permitted to select one, which, for its brilliancy and beauty, might claim that preference, which my gratitude for attentions received from all its members unreflectingly gives. I mean the family of the Prince de Beauveau.\* Interesting by its

---

\* The family de Beauveau is one of the most ancient houses of Lorraine, and they are princes of the empire. The uncle of the present prince was the celebrated minister of Louis XV.; his maternal uncle, the no less celebrated Chevalier de Boufflers, the author of the letters from Switzerland, and the *enfant chéri* of Voltaire. The Princesse de Beauveau, one of the most amiable women in France, is daughter to the Duke de Mortemart. Their eldest son, Prince Charles, is united to the sister of the Duke de Choiseul Praslin, and co-heiress to the wealth of that rich and illustrious family. Their second son, Prince Edmond de Beauveau, who, with his brother, attained at a very early age to high military distinction, is at once a fair,

historical relations, but doubly interesting by its present position, and by combining, in its group of four generations, all that is venerable in age, respectable in maturity, lovely in youth, and charming in infancy.

It is a most gracious sight to behold these little family circles always united, always together ; enjoying the delicious freshness of the summer evenings, in all the public gardens of Paris. The grand-children, and sometimes the great grand-children, attended by their “ *bonnes*,” lead the van, with their light, bounding steps, and playful gambols ; “ *les chers parens*,” as they are usually called, follow : and *le bon papa et. la bonne maman* bring up the rear, with well-sustained gravity. Chairs are hired, or seats are taken immediately, for the elders ; while the younger party are permitted, under the vigilant eye

---

and a splendid image of the youth of France ; gallant, spirited, and impetuous, inheriting “ *l'esprit de Mortemart*,” as his maternal birth-right, with some of the romantic traits and arch humour, which distinguished the youth of the author of the “ *Reine de Golconde*.” The young ladies, Natalie and Gabrielle de Beauveau, are according to the standard of English taste, the loveliest persons in Paris.

of *la bonne*, to skip their ropes, or dance their “*roudes* ;” to form hollow squares, or to mount guard (for all the boys are military;) while “*les petites marchandes*,” or *petites bouquetières*, with well-taught insinuation of manner, offer to “*mes aimables demoiselles*,” or “*beaux jeunes messieurs*,” their *confitures* and nosegays ; for a remuneration, left to the generosity of the young purchasers ; with the usual observation of *mademoiselle a la figure trop aimable, pour que je ne me fie pas à sa générosité*.

The *femme-de-chambre* is at this moment the same familiar, shrewd, important, and ostensible person, in a French family, as she appears in the *Toinettes* and *Dorines*, the inimitable *suivantes* of Moliere. Sometimes the director-general of the establishment, she is *always* the cabinet-minister of her lady ; who generally brings her into the family, on the wedding-day ; and she is not unfrequently the only female servant in the house.

As it is less the fashion with French ladies to “*courir les boutiques*,” than it is with English ladies “*to shop* ;” almost all purchases are made by the *femme-de-chambre*, except matters of mere taste or fancy ; and

I have generally heard it observed, by women of my acquaintance, that the attachment and fidelity of these persons renders them perfectly worthy of the trust reposed in them.

The *suivante* of the young married lady, frequently becomes in time *la bonne* of the matron; and to her care the children are entrusted; even the first rudiments of their education are committed. *La bonne* is a charming character, peculiar to France; something between the Grecian nurse and the Spanish duenna; with all the affectionate devotion of the one, and all the official dignity of the other. Respected by the servants, beloved by the children, and treated with consideration by her employers, *la bonne* generally remains in the family, after her young charge is consigned to the care of superior instructors.\* Voltaire is said to have submitted to the jurisdiction of his *bonne*, at

---

\* The establishment of a French family of rank and fortune generally consists of a *femme-de-chambre* and *femme-de-charge*, a *maître d'hôtel*, and *valet-de-chambre*; two laquais or footmen, one of whom is the *frotteur*, (*the fond de la maison*) performing all the offices of a housemaid with us. To these are added the *chef-de-cuisine*, and *garçon d'office*.

the moment that he exercised an absolute authority over the opinions of more than one-half of literary Europe.

In one of the many delightful conversations I had with Madame la Marquise de Vilette, on the subject of Voltaire, her adopted father, she related to me some pleasant anecdotes of the influence which *Barbara*, or, as he called her, *Baba*, his ancient *bonne*, held over him. Barbara was an old Savoyard, peevish, irritable, and presuming; but devoted to her illustrious charge, and watching with maternal solicitude over those infirmities of his age, from which her own was exempt. "One day," said Mad. de Vilette, "during my residence at Ferney, while I was engaged with my toilette, I was startled by the violent ringing of Voltaire's bell. I flew to his apartment, while Barbara (who always sat in his anti-chamber) hobbled after me. '*Je sonne mon agonie !*' vociferated Voltaire, as we entered together. '*Je me meurs,*'---he then explained to us, that he had drank a cup of rose water by mistake, and was almost poisoned. '*Comment donc !*' exclaimed the provoked Barbara, released from her fears, and restored to her ill-temper.



“ *Comment donc ! Il faut être la bête des bêtes, pour faire une telle sottise !* ”

“ *Bête, ou non,* ’ replied Voltaire, with the subdued tone of a chided school-boy ; ‘ *il n’est guerre plaisant d’être empoisonné même par l’esprit de rose !* ’ ”

Moliere had also his *bonne* ; and *Baba* ; and *la Foret*, belong as much to posterity, as the illustrious geniuses, whom they had the honour to serve.

The state of domestic servitude in France, has, from the earliest times, evinced the inherently amiable and mild disposition of the people ; a disposition which alone ameliorated and rendered durable the severity of the feudal system. The term *domestique* rarely carried with it any sense of degradation. In the days of Charlemagne, many of the great officers of the crown bore the same epithet as the domestic servants of the court. The ancient nobility placed their children in a sort of domestic servitude in the families of noblemen, more opulent and more powerful than themselves. Bayard, the “ *chevalier sans tache et sans peur,* ” was conducted, while yet a boy, by his father, to the castle of his rich and powerful uncle the bishop of Greno-

ble, to be enrolled among the youth of the prelate's establishment; when, after mass, "*On se mit à table, où derechef chacun fit très bonne chère et y servoit le bon chevalier, tant sagement et honnêtement, que tout le monde en disoit du bien.*" The young Bayard soon learnt the graces of his office, with all the address of the young Cyrus; and when the Duke of Savoy came to dinner at the bishop's, "Bayard," says Theodore Godfroy, "*le servoit très mignonnement.*"

It is not very long since the Duc de Bouillons\* paid to the Noailles a pension, "*parce qu'elle étoit la récompense des services domestiques rendus par un Noailles à la maison de Turenne;*" and Louis XIV. talks of sending a "*grand seigneur, qui est mon domestique,*" on an embassy to the Pope.

Modern servitude in France, less dignified and respectable than in more primitive times, is still softened by many indulgences, and

\* A curious incident took place some years back at Paris. Mons. G——c, a private gentleman, dressed his servants in the same livery as the Duke de Villerois. The duke took exception to it. Mons. G——e told him, that the livery was his own, and that the Villerois had formerly worn it.

rendered more tolerable by the mutual goodwill which usually exists between the master and the domestic. The health and comfort of the servants in France are much more attended to than in any part of Great Britain. They are not confined, the greater portion of the day, under ground, in *unwholesome vaults*, dignified by the name of kitchen and offices. The French *office* is on the ground-floor; or, frequently, every *étage* has its little kitchen, where the *chef-de-cuisine* and the *garçon d'office* only inhabit; all the rest of the domestics occupy *the anti-room*, which is too near the apartment of the superior of the family, to admit of boisterous mirth, or coarse impropriety.

This chamber, generally spacious, looks into the court-yard, and is simply furnished with necessary accommodations; its *stove* is the *foyer* of domestic sociality in winter, and in summer, the open windows are equally attractive. Here the *femme-de-chambre*, always seated at her work-table, glances her shrewd look, from under the eye, at the guest who passes on to the apartment of her lady: here the *maître d'hôtel* looks over his accounts; and the *valet-de-chambre* reads his

novel, or his play; ready to perform his office of *groom of the chamber*; while the more bustling *frotteur*, who in the evening assists as *laquais*, or footman, is engaged in all the active service of the house during the day.\* Here too are received all the servants who may arrive with the carriages of the guests; for the lady and her footman walk up together; and each have an equally comfortable apartment to receive them. A poor gentleman in boots, or a prince covered with all the *insignia* of rank and royalty, seem to excite the same sensation in the anti-room. The servants all keep their seats; and no one attempts to rise at the entrance of the most distinguished guest, but the *maître d'hôtel* or *valet*; who is to throw open *les grands battans*, with a theatrical air, and announce, with a most stentorial voice, the rank and name of the stranger.

There is no contrast more shocking and violent, in English society, than that presented by the situation of master and servants, during the hours of social intercourse

---

*Additional Note.* \* In the anti-chambers of the higher classes, the *laquais* alone are suffered to appear.

of fashionable London. For the one, the air is perfumed with roses, and the chill atmosphere of winter expelled by every artificial contrivance; and comfort, enjoyment, and accommodation, are studiously accumulated. For the other, all is hardship, suffering, and endurance. Exposed for hours to all the inclemency of the season, in listless idleness, or in vicious excess (the necessary and inevitable alleviation of their degraded situation), this large and useless class of persons gratify the ostentation of their masters, at the expense of health, and of every better feeling and higher consideration.

In France, the health, comfort, and morals of the servants gain by an arrangement, which good taste, and good feeling, seem alike to have instituted. When the guests of the evening assembly arrive at the *portecochère*, the porter assigns a place, either in a vacant *remise*, or in the court-yard, for the carriage and horses, which, generally sheltered from the weather, and shut up under the care of the porter, leave no further anxiety on the minds of the masters or servants, who usually ascend together the vast open staircase. While the former pass on to

the salon, the latter join the circle of second-hand high life, in the anti-room ; which, well lighted and well warmed, generally presents a card-table, where some round game is playing; or where, perhaps, little groups assemble, while some one reads aloud the journals of the day, a novel, tale, or *vaudeville* ; for every body reads in Paris, and the servants are neither last nor least among the studious.\*

I believe, indeed, it is peculiar to France, that there exists in it a branch of literature, which, if not very extensive, is solely appropriated to the use and benefit of servants. “ *Le vrai régime du gouvernement des Bergers et des Bergères*,” by *Le bon Berger*, is a very ancient production, applicable to the rustic

---

\* Passing through the anti-room, at Mad. de Briche's, one Sunday evening, I was accidentally detained there for a few minutes; during which time I counted thirty servants engaged in playing round games. Among the showy French liveries, I perceived those of the Hardwick family, of the British ambassador, and of some other distinguished British families. The English footmen seemed to assimilate very readily with French modes; and doubtless thought this a pleasanter mode of passing their time, than waiting in the streets, or even struggling to get admittance under a temporary shed, in London.

*ménage*. “*Le parfait cocher*,” supposed to have been written by the Duke de Nevers; “*L’Auteur laquais*;” “*La vie de Jasmin, le bon laquais*;” “*La maison réglée*;” “*Les Devoirs généreux des domestiques de l’un et l’autre sexe envers Dieu, et leur maîtres et maîtresses, par un domestique*;” and “*Le moyen de former un bon domestique*,” are all works of great utility, written with appropriate simplicity; and making but a small part of the domestic library.

I was one day walking on the *quai Voltaire*, followed by our *laquais de place*, when he suddenly stepped up to me, and, pointing to a bookseller’s shop, “*Au grand Voltaire*,” he observed; “*Voilà, Madame, une maison consacrée au génie!*” There died Voltaire---in that apartment with the shutters closed. “There,” he added, emphatically, “died the *first* of our great men; perhaps also the *last*.”

Upon all occasions, indeed, this intelligent attendant exhibited a knowledge of French literature, which, from a discovery he once incidentally made, appeared to me the more surprising.

I was one morning writing a note to the Baron Denon; and being a little doubtful of

the purity of my French, I was reading aloud my billet to my husband, for the benefit of his grammatical experience; when our valet, Charles, who was arranging some flowers in the room, paused in his work to listen to me. Before I had got half through my note, he interrupted me with, "*Mille pardons, mais Madame---*" and he hesitated. "This is not French, then," I observed: "is it not so, Charles?" "*Mais, oui, Madame, c'est Français si vous voulez, mais ce n'est pas PUR; et puis, pour le style C'EST FROID.*"

"As for instance, Charles?"

"*Eh bien, madame, par exemple, you begin by saying, you regret that you cannot have the pleasure, &c. &c. and you should say je suis au désespoir.*"

I proposed to Charles to write the letter himself, and that I would copy it.

"You may write it, at my dictation, if you please, *miladi*," said Charles; "but for reading and writing," he added, "*voilà une branche de mon éducation, qu'on a tout à fait négligée.*"

The note, as dictated by Charles, was sent to Mons. Denon, and I believe holds a place among the other curiosities of his collection.



The circumstance of this *illiterate literatus*, quoting, and occasionally alluding, to works of celebrity,\* notwithstanding his having neglected the more vulgar attainment of *reading and writing*, induced me to make some inquiry as to his mode of study. Charles informed me that it was usual for the lower classes, in his *quartier*, to assemble at each other's doors in the summer's evenings, for the purpose of listening to some "*lecture*." All who could read, took the book in turn: and those who could not, listened, marked, learned, and inwardly digested.

The number, however, who cannot in turn contribute to the instruction of their friends, is very small. Nothing is more usual than to see the hackney-coachmen reading on their stands, and even the "*commissionnaires*," and the *porteurs d'eau*, drawing a duodecimo from their pockets, and perusing it with the most profound attention, in the intervals of their

---

\* Speaking of *La Belle Limonadière* of the *Palais-Royal*, Charles applied to her a line from Molière: "*Elle ouvre une grande bouche, pour ne rien dire*," adding "*car elle est aussi bête que belle*."

labour. It is impossible to visit "*les Halles*," the Parnassus of the comic Vadée, without being struck with the market, opened equally for poetry and potatoes, for philosophy and fish, for herbs and history. There the cries of "*Haricots verts*," and "*voyez, voyez, monsieur, des maqueroux frais*," are mingled with "*voilà les fables de la Fontaine, voilà le Télémaque de Fenelon ! voilà les contes de Mons. de Voltaire !*" Food for the mind and for the body is here bought with equal facility, and both are adapted to the means of the humble purchasers ; for it is certain that these hawkers would not carry their classical ware to the haunts of the lowly and the vulgar, if they did not find a ready market even among fish-wives and *marchandes des herbes*.

The benevolent Mons. Chamousset, the Howard of France, projected a society for servants so early as in 1754, under the name of "*L'établissement pour les domestiques malades, et l'asyle pour les servantes hors de condition*."\* Other similar establishments have

---

\* "*On conte*," says the Abbé Gregoire in his excellent work, "*De la domesticité*," &c. "*actuellement dans la*

arisen since the revolution, to improve their condition, and to provide against the inevitable evils of age and infirmity.

There is no class, in France, whose manners so strongly retain the marks of the short-lived day of "liberty and equality," as the domestic servants. There is indeed a certain line of deference and respect which they never pass; but within that boundary, they are communicative, easy, and almost familiar; and with their masters, as with their friends, they consult, advise, forewarn, condole and rejoice, with undisguised sympathy and interest. I have frequently noticed, in the first houses, a servant tap his master on the shoulder, to direct his attention to some guest who stood in need of it. It would be there quite unnecessary to make exception for a *licensed risibility*, in favour of "*old Grouse, in the gun-room*," as Diggory does with M. Hardcastle. A French laquais feels the merit of a good story to the full as much as his master; and is almost as audible, in testifying his approbation. I have some-

---

*capitale quatre vingts corporations de ce genre, qui embrassent au moins six mille familles, ce qui les porte à l'économie, aux bonnes œuvres, à l'assistance réciproque."*

times seen the servants almost convulsed with laughter, at the pleasantries and humorous stories that circulated among the guests, upon whom they were attending.

The familiarity and influence of the servants at a certain period of society, in France, their acuteness, dexterity, and *finesse*, furnished the whole dramatic poets and novel writers with their leading characters and plots. And though the general diffusion of knowledge, occupation of time, and improvement of morals, must naturally lessen the influence of low cunning, and dispense with the agency of unprincipled ability; still great quickness of perception, and shrewdness of observation, may be traced in the successors of the *Scapins*, the *Mascarils*, and *Scagnarelles*, of the older times.

Shortly before I left Paris, a friend of mine told me that his *valet-de-chambre*, one morning while dressing his hair, perceiving that he was reading La Bruyère, observed, “*Cet homme là avait une grande connoissance du cœur humain; mais il lui munqua une chose, c'est d'avoir été valet-de-chambre.*”

---

In the curious epistolary correspondence,

carried on for some time between Louis XV. and his friend, the Marechal Duc de Richelieu, the king (always speaking of himself in the third person) communicates the following important decision—“ *Sa majesté a décidé l'affaire des parasols ; et la décision a été, que les dames et les duchesses pouvoient en avoir, à la procession ; en conséquence elles en ont.*”

In a country, where the despotic chief of the government thus interested himself in the complexion of his subjects, and made the affair of the parasols an act of legislation ; the toilette could not fail to be an object of national attention, nor escape the interference of royal ordinances and legislative protection.

Louis XIV. the solemn Pope of all frivolities, presided with an infallibility of judgment never disputed, over the wardrobes of his mistresses. He seldom failed to attend the *toilette* of Madame de Maintenon, even when the graces had ceased to be the handmaid ; and it was in the dressing-room of the *dauphine*, where Mad. de Maintenon officiated as *Dame d'Atours*, that the king irrecoverably lost his heart ; subdued by the dexterity and grace with which she arranged

the tresses of the royal head. "*Il est inconcevable,*" says that artful person, speaking of this circumstance, "*comme l'art de bien peigner les cheveux, ait contribué à mon élévation.*"

The *toilette*, like the Aristolelian philosophy, reigned absolute over public opinion in France.---From its dogmas and doctrines there was no appeal; and Buffon's maxim of "you may know a man by the sort of coat he wears," was received into general application. All, therefore, who were not "*mis noblement et avec magnificence,*" decided at once their own inferiority of qualification and condition.

Crebillon (himself a man of fashion) makes much of the merits and success of his heroes depend upon their being "*vêtus supérieurement, avec goût et avec noblesse.*" In like manner, his heroine becomes interesting, according to the shades of her rouge, and irresistible from the air of "*une coëffure négligée.*"\*

When the virtuous Roland, the republican

---

\* See *Les Figarements du cœur et de l'esprit.*

minister of Louis XVI. first appeared at the court of Versailles, the peculiar homeliness of his toilette excited a universal sensation. In the minds of those, who held their own existence from the observance of certain etiquettes, and who believed the safety of the government would be endangered by their violation; the round hat, and the black shoe-strings of the new minister, awakened the most perfect consciousness of his inability to fill the office he had obtained. Monsieur de B\*\*, the master of the ceremonies, the very "*glass of fashion and mould of form*," expressed his anxiety on the subject to General Dumourier, who was present, with "*voyez donc, mon ami, pas même des boucles dans ses souliers.*"

"*Ah, Monsieur!*" exclaimed Dumourier, with well-affected gravity, shrugging his shoulders, "*tout est perdu.*"

Robespierre, during the most sanguinary period of his reign, was distinguished by the delicate and affected *recherche* of his dress; and a muslin waistcoat, lined with silk, *couleur de rose*, and a coat of "*bleu le plus tendre*," was the favourite costume of this

monster: who, inaccessible to every feeling of humanity, still submitted to the influence of fashion.

While modes have recently changed in France, with governments and institutions; while the *tunic of Aspasia* has succeeded to *sacks and hoops*, and has been *superseded* in its turn\* by *ruffs and farthingales*; while the

\* I have occasionally assisted at the *toilette* of some of my French friends, and been much amused by the questions of their *femme-de-chambres*, or their female *coëffeurs*, as to the important arrangements of the day. “*Quelle coëffure madame a-t-elle choisie ? Veut-elle être coëffée à la Ninon ? ou à la Grec ? Madame est charmante à la Sevigné. Et superbe à l'Agrippina.*” The humour of the fair person occasionally decides her character and dress for the day, and sends her forth a *fierce republican*, with a Roman head; or a *royaliste outré*, “*friséé naturellement, à la Pompadour !*” “I am very ill to-day,” said the excellent and amiable Empress Josephine (who, however, *par parenthèse*, was an empress and a French woman); “give me a cap *qui sente la petite santé.*” A cap of *delicate health* was presented to her. “*Mais, c'est trop malade ! Vous croyez donc, que je vais mourir ?*” A head-dress of more *healthy appearance* was produced by the attendant. “*Encore donc,*” exclaimed the empress with a languid yawn, “*vous me trouvez si robuste.*” I had this anecdote from a person of rank, who was at this *levee*, who admired her virtues, and laughed at her caprices.



*chignon à la Seigné*, or *coëffure de Ninon*, now triumph over *la tête à l'Agrippina*, or the flowing tresses of the *Venus Anadyoméne*; still, under all changes and vicissitudes, the toilette has preserved its empire and its influence unshaken and undiminished.

The “cloud-capt towers and gorgeous palaces” have melted and dissolved away; the royalists have become rebels, courtiers turned republicans, and coquettes become Roman matrons:---still the temple of fashion has kept its station of eminence unshaken; and it still finds its vestibule crowded with votaries, and its altars smoking with frankincense and myrrh.

Napoleon, who scanned with a searching eye all that was *strong* or *feeble* in the French character, turning it to the purposes of his own ambition, made his *due offering* to the personal vanity of the French, by consulting with boundless profusion, and unequalled splendour, their taste for dress. The *costume* of his coronation and his court, the draperies of the state, and of the corporate and legislative bodies, were all marked by a richness and magnificence, unknown even in the most ostentatious days of France. Each

order had its livery; the dress and the sentiment were frequently dictated by the same power; and were adopted with equal readiness and promptitude, at his command.

Buonaparte, however, who protected the toilette with one hand, and the altar with the other, as equally efficient agents in his views, was a mere *Tartuffe* himself in faith and finery; and secretly indifferent to the external forms of both. His robe of a *hundred skins*, and his golden toilette, which now obtains the admiration of foreign royalty, and gratifies the curiosity of Europe by its exhibition; these “*outward seemings*” were all designed for the *vulgar multitude*. His *plain blue coat and little hat*, strictly copied from the *costume* of his idol king of Prussia, were *for himself*.\*

---

\* This two-fold character of *emperor and man* was extremely obvious to those who knew him well. He was quite a different personage to the few who had “*les petites entrées*,” and the many who had only “*les grandes*.” One who always enjoyed the privilege of the former, and who long lived with him in habits of intimacy, told me that going into his apartment one afternoon, when he was *tête-à-tête* with the young empress, he found him in high spirits, and that having looked into the adjoining anti-room to see that *all was clear*, he turned to Monsieur \* \* \*, and said,

The toilette, thus supported in France, “*De par le Roi*,” by “the united and *invisible* republic,” and by the “*ordonnance impériale*,” reigns in the present moment with all its ancient supremacy. Intimately

---

“*Dancez-vous encore?*” “*Mais oui, toujours,*” was the reply: “*allons donc,*” said the Emperor, “*dansons!*” “*Il dansa,*” said Mons. \*\*\*, “*tout à travers, mais de tout son cœur.*” This extraordinary man exacting the most profound respect, in public, admitted, in private, the most boundless familiarity; and thus frequently led those who were intimate with him to risk themselves beyond the boundary of propriety.

General Rapp was devotedly attached to the Emperor, but extremely careless in his address and conversation with him. This veteran in service was standing one morning in the anti-room of Napoleon’s *private* apartment, when he perceived one of the gentlemen in waiting conducting a man of very equivocal character into the imperial cabinet. This person remained a considerable time closeted with the Emperor. Rapp grew impatient, and, anxious for the safety of Napoleon, repeatedly thrust his rough head in at the door, to see whether all was right; and as suddenly withdrew it. The suspicious stranger at last took his leave, and Rapp obtained his audience. “*Que diable,*” exclaimed Buonaparte, as Rapp entered, “*que diable voulez-vous donc, en mettant votre tête à la porte comme cela?*” “*C’est que je tremblai pour vous,*” replied Rapp, “for perhaps you do not know, that the person with whom you have been closeted is a traitor, a rogue, a swindler, *en un mot, c’est un Corse, voilà!*”

connected, as it now appears to be with *legitimacy* in Europe, blending its interest, in England, with those of *church and state*, and occupying the leisure hours of the majesty of Spain;\* it assumes in France the same form, influence, and importance, as when her kings presided over *tortoise-shell combs*, and determined, *in council*, on the re-instatement and restitution of a *banished parasol*.

That “*Esprit de système*,” that submission to regulations to which the French seem to submit, from the necessity of giving *ballast* to their *sail*, by an artificial weight foreign to their own specific lightness, is observed equally in the genius of their toilette, as in their poetry and their dramas. The regulated observances of both are never violated: both are equally deficient in imagination, and both are cultivated in despite of natural impediments. France has never been the land of *poetry* nor of *beauty*, and yet poetry is the passion, and dress the object of the nation.

---

\* The king of Spain embroiders with great elegance. Hitherto his works have been chiefly confined to the *toilette of the Virgin Mary*, whom he has lately presented with some drapery, embroidered by his own royal hands.

It is on this point that French women are most fallible; and lose all that is most interesting in their characters, or respectable in their conduct. Here economy ends, and extravagance begins, *to know no bounds*. Here all that is frivolous supersedes all that is essential; and all that is light floats to the surface. The merits of the *divine cachemir*; and the “*joli mouchoir de poche brodé*,” rapidly succeed to financial discussions, and political arguments; and, “*combien de cachemires avez-vous, ma chère?*” is a question, asked with more importance, and considered with more gravity, than would be given to the new political tracts of M. M. Chateaubriand and Fievée, by the many fair disciples of those grand vizirs of *ultra-states-women*.

The elegant produce of the Indian loom is an indispensable object to every French woman, and from the estimation it is held in, one would suppose there was “magic in the web of it.” I shall never forget the mingled emotions of pity and amazement I excited, in one of my French friends, by assuring her, I never had been *mistress of a cachemir*.

“*Ah! seigneur Dieu, mais c'est inconce-*

*vable, ma belle,*" and she added that I ought to buy one, with the produce of my next work. I replied: "I had rather buy a little estate with it."

"*Eh, bien, ma chère,*" she answered quickly, "*un cachemir, c'est une terre, n'est-ce pas?*"

In fact, these valuable and expensive shawls generally do become *heir-looms*, in a French family.

"*Voilà un trait de toilette pour vous, mon enfant,*" said Mad. de Genlis to me one morning, as I entered her pretty apartment, at the Carmelite convent, to which she has retired. "Here is a trait will amuse you;" and she related to me the following anecdote.

A little before I had paid my visit, a young gentleman had left this celebrated lady, suddenly cured of a passion for a young married woman, against which Mad. de Genlis had long and vainly preached. She had argued the matter with him morally, prudentially, sentimentally; she had even, like Mad. de Sevigné (in listening to her son's confessions, respecting *Ninon*), tried to get in "*un petit mot de Dieu*:" but it was all in vain; until a shawl "*peau de lapin*" effected

what the charming eloquence of Mad. de Genlis failed to produce.

He had the night before attended his "*chère belle*" to a ball: she sent him to her carriage for her shawl. He flew to be the bearer of the *supérbe cachemir*, breathing its kindred roses; but (death to every finer feeling of fashion, taste, and sentiment) the laquais drew from the pocket of the carriage — a shawl *peau de lapin*!! "*Plus de prêchements donc, ma chère comtesse,*" added the convalescent lover; "*c'est une affaire finie!* Never can *love* and *rabbit skins* be associated in my imagination; and believe, my dear madam, *qu'il n'y a pas d'amour à tenir contre un schall, peau de lapin!*"

The modern revolutionary *mouchoir de poche brodé* is a great refinement upon the *royalist pocket handkerchief* of other times. This elegant expensive little article is as indispensable to a Parisian fine lady, as the *cachemir*; and its effects occasionally seem equal to that of the "charmed handkerchief of Othello; which did

" An Egyptian to his mother give,  
To make her amiable."

A gentleman once accused my charming

friend, Mad. la Comtesse d'H\*\*le, of having no lace or embroidery on her handkerchief. She laughed at his observation: "You are in the wrong," he replied, "*car il n'y a rien, qui monte la tête d'un homme, comme le joli mouchoir d'une jolie femme.*"

Every season has its peculiar lace, in France; and the annual festivals of the church are not even *now*, observed with more punctuality, than the transition from *point* to *Malines*, or from *Valenciennes* to *blond de fils*, as their respective seasons recur.

"*Comment donc, monsieur,*" said one of the gentlemen of the court to *Monsieur D\*\**, looking at his ruffles; "*vous voilà en point, au mois de Mai!*"

"*C'est que je suis enrhumé,*" was the excuse for the *heaviness* of lace, which is strictly appropriated to the winter season.

From the Majesty of France down to the most insignificant of his subjects, every bridegroom in the kingdom presents the "*trousseau*," or bridal wardrobe, to the fair object of his election; and I observed that I never entered the morning apartment (which consists of the bed-room and the *boudoir*) of any young married woman, that the elegant cor-



*bcille* and *sultane* did not present themselves among its most splendid decorations.

When the day of the royal nuptials of the Duc and Duchesse de Berri approached, the royal *trousseau* appeared to me to have become an object of national concern; at least to the court party. Wherever I went, I heard nothing but “*when* is the *trousseau* to be seen? *Where* is the *trousseau* to be seen? Have you got tickets for the *trousseau*?” &c. &c. Field-m Marshals talked of it; ministers discussed it; veterans guarded it; poets sung it, and journalists eulogized it. It ran through all the alphabetical distinctions of “*A* was an apple-pie;” and *peers* and *deputies*, *ordonnances* and *budgets*, were forgotten in its discussions.

The first day of its exhibition was reserved for the royal family; who found in this revived ceremony, in favour of caps and petticoats, the return of that glorious reign, which so solemnly took cognizance of *parasols*. The next day was for the court and French nobility. The four following days were given to the gratification of such of the public, as had influence or interest, to obtain *tickets of admission* from the Tuileries. Of

these, there was no lack; as it was a sort of state policy to revive a taste for gauzes and flowers, and "leather and prunella," in a degenerated people, who for twenty years back had been formed

"*De se donner l'air d'aimer sa patrie.*"

and to think as little of these important *accessories* of *legitimate* power, as if their ancestors had not *bled at every pore*, to provide them for the best dressed kings in Europe.

The population of Paris make the most accommodating and the civilest crowd of any metropolis in the world. I never on any occasion saw the French character forfeit its politeness and urbanity; but on the occasion of the "*trousseau*." There the importance of the object overcame all forms and ceremonies; and the efforts, the struggles, that agitated the crowds which filled the courtyard of the *palais des menus plaisirs*, occupied its vestibule; and climbed its great stairs; the frightful press; the irresistible crush; the interference of the generals, too often unavailing; the cries, the ejaculations, the prayers, the fears, altogether rendered the entrance to the royal *trousseau* one of the

most awful, as well as most dangerous scenes I ever witnessed.

At last, after full *two hours'* efforts, and more suffering from heat and apprehension than I ever endured, we passed the last barrier (for there were *four* to overcome, all guarded by *mousquetaires*, with their bayonets fixed), and arrived at the sanctum sanctorum of the royal *toilette*. A long suite of beautiful rooms were thrown open, whose lofty walls were thickly covered with robes of every hue, tint, web, and texture; from the imperial drapery of coronation-splendour, to the simple robe-de-chambre of British lace and British muslin; from the diamond coronet to the *bonnet-de-nuit*: while platforms or counters surrounding each room, were guarded off from the unhallowed touch of plebeian curiosity by silken cords; and placed under the *surveillance* of the priests and priestesses of the toilette, -in *grand pontificals*. These formed the sanctuary of all the *minor attributes* of the royal wardrobe. Every article of female dress, from the most necessary to the most superfluous, was here arranged, not by *dozens*, but by *hundreds*. Here queen *Sheba* might have died of envy ;---here the

treasures of the “forty thieves,” or the “*cave of Baba Abdalla*,” were rivalled or surpassed, not only in splendour but in quantity. The life of the old Countess of Desmond would have been too short, though spent in dressing, to exhaust such a wardrobe as here presented itself; and if such was the sumptuous provision to be made for the future *daughters of France*, it may be truly said, that “Solomon, in all his glory, *was not arrayed like one of these*.”

Among the spectators of these fairy treasures, I observed many of the *new old* French military. The *croix de St. Louis* sparkled on every side, and ambulating ribbons vied with those which hung stationary on their silken lines. “*Mais, c’est du dernier goût !*” “*c’est du dernier galant !*” “*c’est superbe !*” “*c’est magnifique !*” was echoed from the lips of those, who may be soon called on to give the word of command, which is to succeed to the “*en avant*” of a more energetic leader.

The triumph evident in the looks of these “*chevaliers de la bonne cause*,” and of the dames who accompanied them, as they surveyed all the “pomp and circumstance of

glorious" dress, was a proof how strongly it recalled to their memory or imagination that *millennium*, for which they have so long sighed, and now beheld fast arriving. *This was going back at once to the halcyon days of Louis XIV. when more money was expended in fitting out the trousseaux of the nieces of the king's mistress, than would have pacified the murmurs of the famished people; who loaded the favourite with execration, and withdrew from the sovereign the title of "GREAT," which he had never truly merited, and which he long survived."*\*

---

\* The king was so liberal in his donations to Mademoiselle D'Aubigné, when she married the Duc de Noailles, that even Mad. de Maintenon feared that "*le peuple n'ait le droit de lui reprocher d'enrichir ses nièces au dépens de l'intérêt public.*" But when the Cardinal de Noailles wrote her word that the people *cursed her*, she coolly replied, "*S'il me maudit, c'est qu'il ne me connaît pas.*" The wedding presents of the king to the favourite niece, were the government of several provinces to her husband, a pension of two thousand crowns as pocket-money for herself, the same salary from the duché de Burgundy, diamonds to the value of fifty thousand livres, and eight hundred thousand livres, as a *présent dès noces*. Shortly after these donations, Mad. de Maintenon observes, "*Il n'a pas un sous. Les moyens d'avoir de l'argent irritent; parce qu'ils sont tous violens.*"

While France, degraded by her actual position, groans with ill-stifled indignation, as she beholds herself in the thralldom of those powers she so lately held in subjection; while she is urged by her necessities to seek her resources in foreign wealth, to pay the foreign troops, under whose jurisdiction she exists; the policy may be questioned, as well as the taste, of thus exposing to the eye of a divided people proofs of such boundless extravagance and idle vanity.

When the marriage of the future queen of England\* lately took place, no such insult was offered to the people. The idol and the hope of a free nation, her look of health and smile of joy were the sole exhibition it sought and hailed with manly, heart-felt satisfaction. The people of England demand only in their

---

*Additional Note.* \* Alas! "never shall sun that morrow see." The pride, the hope of Britain is fallen, and the grave has closed on the idol of nations! Short as was the course of this genuinely *English* princess, it has not been unuseful to mankind. The memory of her domestic virtues will live to counteract less wholesome examples. In her life she has taught the means of securing a nation's love; and her death has manifested the boundless resources, which that love offers to the ruler, who disdains not to make it the foundation of his power.

legitimate rulers the accomplishment of those promises, which obtained the throne for their family, who were not *legitimate*; and who, elected by the people, expelled from the nation the frivolous, bigoted, and oppressive race, *who were so*. For the rest, for “*purple and gold, and fine linen*;” for princely wardrobes, and royal toilettes, they have no respect; and, interested in concerns of dearer moment, they leave such “*unsubstantial pageants*” to the admiration of the waiting-women and *valets-de-chambre* of the royal household. Idle and degraded as the crowds, who darkened the courts and chambers of the *Palais des menus plaisirs*, during the exhibition of the Dutchess de Berri’s toilette, must have appeared, in the eyes of strangers, and particularly of *English strangers*; it may be said upon this occasion, as upon all others, which call the character of the French nation into question, that *Paris has a population for every thing*:---for royal *trousseaux*, and free *constitutions*; and that, amidst the various, motley groupings of its extensive society, will be found some of

“*The brightest, wisest, MEANEST of mankind.*”

# FRANCE.

---

## BOOK IV.

---

### P A R I S.

Que Paris est changé ! les Velches n'y sont plus ;  
Je n'entends plus siffler ces ténébreux reptiles,  
Les Tartuffes affreux, les insolents Zoïles.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mes yeux, après trente ans, n'ont vu qu'un peuple aimable,  
Instruit, mais indulgent, doux, vif, et sociable.

\* \* \* \* \*

De la société les douceurs désirées  
Dans vingt états puissants sont encore ignorées.  
On les goûte à Paris, c'est le premier des arts ;  
Peuple heureux ! il naquit, il règne en vos ramparts.

VOLTAIRE—*Epîtres.*

Je me suis emparé d'une heureuse matière ;  
Je chante l'homme à table.

BERCHOUX.





# FRANCE.

---

## BOOK IV.

---

### P A R I S.

*Habits of the Parisian Table.—Petits-Soupers.—  
Déjeuners à la fourchette.—Château de Plaisance.  
—Vincennes.—Chapelle expiatoire.—Hospitality.  
—Dinners.—The Soirée.—The grande Réunion.  
—The Bal Paré.*

**I**N the great social *bouleversement*, which occurred at the first period of the revolution, every habit of life, connected with the old regime, submitted to the general change, and was abolished in favour of some new mode, leaning to the extreme of opposition. All was suppression and substitution. Even the highly-prized *petit-souper*, whether as the domestic centre of family re-union, or as the *point de rassemblement* of pleasure, wit, and fashion, shared the law of proscription; and the substantial *revolutionary breakfast*,

the *déjeuner à la fourchette*, was established, as more conformable to the laws of republican ethics, and more favourable to the preservation of health and morals. These breakfasts, however, with all the air of republican simplicity ascribed to them by their founders, were far from being composed of the black broth and bread of Spartan frugality. They combined every species of luxury and extravagance, instituted a new class in what Montaigne calls "*la science de la gueule*," and by the wit and *gourmandise* of some of their presiding *hierophants*, added a new and very humorous branch to the high burlesque in French literature; while they refined, and multiplied the resources of the *gastronomic* art to infinitude.

Before the revolution, few persons of any rank took a regular breakfast; even their dinner was not always the most substantial or luxurious meal; nor ordinarily that of etiquette. The hebdomadary dinners, given by the professed patrons of wit and talent to authors and artists, and those of ministers and men in office, form nearly the sole exception. The supper, on the contrary, combined all that was brilliant in society, and

elegant in display. “ *Le Duc de Luxembourg ne dinoit point, et ne se mettoit presque pas à table,*” says Rousseau, describing the daily habits of the Château de Montmorenci; adding, that the dinner there, was but a slight repast, taken usually in the open air, “ *et comme on dit, sur le bout du banc; au lieu que le souper étoit très long.*”

To these suppers, given at nine miles distance from Paris, the *gens comme il faut* of the capital constantly resorted. The minister de Choiseul and the Prince de Condé were frequently among the guests, who drove out of town to a supper; as the fashionables of London now assemble for a late dinner, at their villas in its neighbourhood.

In the time of the regency, it appears that Mad. de Simiani, the grand-daughter of Mad. de Sevigné, supped at seven o'clock. Even then, however, this was deemed an early hour, and was said to have been adopted, to accommodate her reputed admirer, the celebrated Massillon; who was obliged to return to the *Oratoire*, his place of residence, before nine.\* Down to the days of Louis XVI.

---

\* This eloquent preacher and pious divine is traditionally reported to have been very gallant, and susceptible to.

the French supper was sufficiently early, to admit of every kind of party being formed, and enjoyed, after it was over. It was then the card table was *made up*, pharo commenced, and the ball began. This meal was, in fact, but little different from the present English *late* dinner; and as upon these occasions all the *recherche* of cookery was displayed, and every temptation was given to intemperance, the *souper* was at least unwholesome; and it induced the physician Dumoulin to declare, “*qu’il ne se relevoit jamais pour un homme, qui n’avait pas soupé.*”

Of these once elegant and fashionable entertainments, not a trace now remains. The only suppers I saw were very slight and simple refreshments, after the *bals pares*.

The most usual, and indeed the most fashionable evening collation, is “*le thé,*” which, without being strictly the English

---

female charms. It was at one of these *soupers, tête-à-tête*, that he is supposed to have made the following stanzas :

“ Aimons nous tendrement, Elvire :  
Ceci n’est qu’une chanson,  
Pour qui voudroit en médire,  
Mais, *pour nous*, c’est tout de bon !”

tea, or the French *gôûter*, formerly taken between dinner and supper, combines much of what is best in both---the exhilarating beverage of souchong and hyson, with confectionary and ices, found only in France; and green tea punch, not excelled even in Ireland. I have heard, however, many a veteran disciple of the gay, exciting *petit souper*, place this substitution among the worst changes effected by the revolution, and lament in pathetic terms, that

“ Par un abus coupable,  
Les soupers sont proscrits—on déserte la table.”

Coming into France with the old impressions of “*frogs and soupe maigre*,” I was surprised to find that all that has been said of the excellence and substantiality of a Scotch breakfast, was rivalled, if not exceeded, by a French *déjeuner*. The morning after we arrived at *La Grange*, the venerable château of General La Fayette, we found his family of three generations assembled in the salon; and the breakfast was announced, as formally, by the maître-d’hôtel, as the dinner had been the day before.

On descending to the *salle-à-manger*, we

found a long table profusely covered with roasts, ragouts, dressed fish, pastry, salads, fruits, and sweetmeats, with all sorts of wines, while tea and coffee were served round, *pour la digestion*; and the French breakfast literally ended where the English one begins. This style of breakfasting I found universal in every house, where I became an inmate; and they were not few. It has been adopted within the last twenty years by persons of all parties, who have remained in France during the revolution; many of whom, while they execrate the event, adopt and approve the modes and habits of life, which it has originated.

The *déjeuner à la fourchette*, taken in the middle of the day, is among the most fashionable entertainments of Paris, during the spring season, and is usually given at the *maison de plaisance*, or villa, which is considered as a sort of half-way house in a half-way season, between the Parisian *hotel* and the provincial *château*; while the *petit-maison* is now as little known as the *petit-souper*; and both have fallen together with the state of morals and manners, which instituted them.

It was at one of these charming villas, on

the shores of the confluence of the Seine and Marne, that I assisted for the first time at a *déjeuner à la fourchette*, as a *fête d'étiquette*. The invited guests, rather select than numerous (which is the case in all French entertainments), assembled in their *calèches*, *berlins*, *cabriolets*, and *barouches*, in the courtyard of the *hôtel de Chabanais*, as the starting point, for the *château de Plaisance*, where the Comtesse d'Hossonville, its hospitable mistress, awaited to receive us.

It was the brilliant morning of a true French summer. Our route obliged us to pass along the Boulevards Italiens and St. Antoine; and the gaiety, the variety, the splendour of these beautiful roads, crowded with fantastic groups, vibrating with cheerful sounds, and shaded by lofty and luxuriant trees, presented a scene of animation, peculiar to that pleasurable scite of life and bustle. In passing through the once elegant *quartier* of the Marais, the hotels of Madame de Sevigné, Ninon de l'Enclos, de Beaumarchais, the ruins of the Bastille, and the stupendous monumental elephant of Buonaparte, were successively pointed out to us. These were curious landmarks to awaken, in so short a



space, an host of associations, and to revive, almost at a single *coup d'œil*, recollections of very different epochs in French history, and in French society. It was our good fortune to have in our carriage Monsieur Dorion, the author of *la bataille de Hastings*, and of many other poetical works; and never, surely, did the sojourners in a strange land find a kinder friend, or a more intelligent guide, than we experienced in this most accomplished gentleman. His kindness and attention began with our arrival in Paris; and it has far from terminated with our departure from France.

Having passed the boulevards, the cheerlessness and silence of the environs of Paris at once succeeded. For this great capital, unlike London, is totally without those "*suburban prolongations*," which, pursuing the track of the great road, extend themselves in double rows of habitations, in the front of dusty meadows, and stunted trees; combining the *désagréments* of rural and of city life, to form a combination, which

"Is not the country, you must own,  
But only London out of town."

With the exception of the venerable woods,

the village and terrific fortress of Vincennes, which we left on our right, no object presented itself to attract our attention, from the pleasant conversation we enjoyed in our own *calèche*.

Arrived at the *château de Plaisance*, we found its elegant mistress ready to receive us in the salon; which by its *parquet*, its painted wainscots, and massive furniture, recalled at once the vignettes, in which the heroines of Marmontel, the "*Clarices*," and the "*Céciles*," are depicted in rural retirement, and in which the *localities* of French manners are so faithfully portrayed. The gardens, the plantations, and the green lawns of Plaisance, are in their neatness, taste, and arrangement, all *English*; but the house, the furniture, the *scite*, the associations, are genuinely *French*.

When that gallant and accomplished voluptuary, Charles VII. at once indulging his taste and his passion, amused himself in the society of Agnes Sorel, with laying out the *parterres* of Meung sur Yèvre; while, devoted to love and pleasure, he permitted the Bedfords and Talbots to overrun his kingdom, and allowed "Henry of England" to

be crowned at the metropolitan church of France;\* it was reserved for the syren, in whose chains he was spell-bound, to rouse him from this fatal dream, and to urge him to feats of force and valour, which recovered his kingdom, and procured him the title of "*le victorieux*."

It was after these victories, which diminished the English power in France, and produced the celebrated peace of Arras, that the king recompensed the elevated passion of his mistress, by giving her the territory and *château de Plaisance*, with the *Isle de Beauté*, near Vincennes, "To the end," says the old chronicle, "that she might be in *fact*, and in name, *Dame de Beauté*."†

In the vicissitudes of time the lovely territory of *Plaisance* and *Beauté* became the pro-

\* Henry VI. crowned in the church of Notre Dame, at Paris, in 1431.

† "*On la nommoit*," says Hainault, "*Madame de Beauté; c'étoit le nom d'un château proche de Vincennes, que le roi lui avoit donné; et elle méritoit bien de porter ce nom. Elle avoit l'âme élevée, et aimoit surtout le Roi.*" *Histoire de France. T. i. p. 384.*

The *château de beauté* was built by Charles V. one of the best of the French sovereigns, at the same time that he finished Vincennes.

perty of the Comte de \*\*\*, whose grand-niece and sole heiress, the present Comtesse d'Hossonville, now inherits it by his bequest. I know not what "nameless grace" Agnes de Sorel may have possessed, to have captivated royal hearts; but if her manner and conversation had any thing of the elegance and charm, which distinguished those of the present *Dame de Plaisance*, I can well credit their influence and fascination.\*

The *déjeuner à la fourchette*, though exhibiting great *recherche* in the delicacies of the table, is by no means confined to their enjoyment. The collation over, the *salle-à-manger* was deserted for the open air; and while some few of the party adjourned to the billiard-

---

\* The Comtes d'Hossonville were *grands louvetiers de France*; and the father of the present count held that office, under Louis XVI. The Count de H— is among those of the ancient nobility, who have rescued a great part of their property from revolutionary seizure. He now hunts on his patrimonial territories, as his father did before him; and is as keen a sportsman, and as devoted to the pleasures of the field, as any Norfolk squire. He was chambellan to the late emperor; being obliged, like many other of the higher nobility, who remained under his government, to accept of office; and he is a peer of France, under the present arrangement.

room, the rest accompanied Madame de Hossonville through the gardens and plantations, rich in flowering shrubs; whence, assisted by her historical recollections, we discovered, "*Le fief des moineaux*," the little feudal territory of the sparrows, which Agnes de Sorél had herself thus named, from the colony of birds, which had settled there. Here, perhaps, in the very walks through which we were loitering, the powerful Georges de la Trimouille and the brave Dunois may have paid their chivalrous court to the "gentle Agnes;" Alain Chartier may have sung her praises; and the honest and unfortunate Jacques de Cœur have received her testamentary commands, when she dictated to him her last wishes, respecting her favourite *Isle de Beauté*.\* Here, too, perhaps Louis XV. first "drank delicious poison from the eyes" of Mad. de Chateauroux: for it was at an entertainment given at Plaisance, by the grand-uncle of Madame d'Hossonville, that

---

\* *De Cœur*, her confidential friend and executor, was accused of her death. He served Charles VII. faithfully as minister of finance; but, like the unfortunate Maid of Orleans, was abandoned by the king, and sacrificed to the intrigues of his enemies.

that monarch first beheld the most beautiful, and apparently the most amiable, of his mistresses \* Of the ancient château of Plaisance nothing remains, except some subterraneous passages, and, at a little distance from the modern building, *les portes de beauté*; old dismantled gates, which open from the village of Nogent into the forest of Vincennes.

On our return to the house, *liqueurs* and a *bouillon* were served; and our carriages being ordered, with the addition of Mad. d'Hossonville's, who returned with us to Paris (for she had only left her hotel in town, to preside at her *fête* in the country), we went to "*promener en voiture*" through the forest, and to visit the castle of Vincennes, *en chemin faisant* to the capital.

Despoiled as the forest of Vincennes has been, from time to time, it still presents a very imposing and noble aspect. In that part, which immediately surrounds the castle, and which is called the park, Louis XI. planted a surface of three thousand feet,

---

\* The first year of Louis XV.'s reign was passed at Vincennes, where he held his court, and in the neighbourhood of Plaisance, which he sometimes visited.

chiefly with oak ;\* and the spot is still marked, where the pious king, St. Louis, in the primitive simplicity of those rude days, held his court and presided in council, under the shade of trees, planted by his predecessors.†

The castle of Vincennes rises in the skirts of the forest. It was once the residence of the kings of France; and it has been too often the tomb of the victims of their uncontrolled despotism. We found the village of Vincennes full of bustle and company ; the *drapeau blanc* floated over the towers of the fortress, a band played “ *vive Henri Quatre,*” before a rustic altar, crowned with lilies, and

\* Louis XI. made his barber, Olivier, surnamed *le diable*, the concierge of Vincennes. It was in his reign, that state prisoners were first committed to its dungeons. It is curious to observe that this Louis, one of the greatest monsters that ever lived, was the first who took the title of *Most Christian King*, and received the appellation of Majesty, “ *peu connu jusqu’alors,*” says Hainault.

† Mainte fois ai vu que le bon saint, après avoir oui messe en été, il se allé *ésbattre* au bois de Vincennes. Il se seoit au pied d’un chêne, et nous fesoit seoir très auprès de lui ; et tous ceux, qui avoient à faire à lui, venaient lui parler, sans qu’aucun *huissier*, ni autre, leur donnât empêchement.”

JOINVILLE. *Collection de l’Histoire de France.*

groups of military drank *vin ordinaire*, in loyal potations, before the door of every *guinguette*. The royal family had just left the village as we entered it: they had visited it on the occasion of a review. It was also some royal holiday; and there was a dinner given by the officers of the garrison, at the principal *auberge*. All admittance to the fortress was at first refused, for it was not open to the public. But an officer of rank, who was of our party, having written a note to the governor, Mons. Puyvert, he immediately sent an order, which unbarred every gloomy portal, and unfolded to our view the dark entrance of that

---

“*Château malheureux,  
Aux beaux esprits hélas! si dangereux.*”

While this little arrangement was making, we had ample time to contemplate the imposing exterior of this ancient edifice. The draw-bridge, its flanked towers, and above all its *donjon*, so often the prison of worth, talent, and sensibility, seem to have been spared by time, as monuments of the dreary and terrific influence of bigotry and tyranny



over human happiness.\* Vincennes was always a place of strength. Rebuilt in 1337, by Phillippe de Valois, and finished by Charles V. it has since merely received some trifling accessions of strength, and it still retains much of its original appearance. On gazing upon the terrific aspect and immense height of its memorable keep, I found it difficult to understand, how pleasure could be so arbitrary in its views, that even kings should have sought it in such a building; and that the early Charles's and Louis's should have chosen the towers of Vincennes, "*pour se soulacier, et s'esbattre*," as the old language of the quaint Joinville has it.

When we had passed the drawbridge (so often crossed by the brave and the unfortu-

---

"\* *En passant devant Vincennes*," says Rousseau, *j'ai senti à la vue du donjon, un déchirement au cœur dont on remarqua l'effet sur mon visage*. It is a curious instance of the shortness of popular conceptions, that the citizens of Paris, after destroying the Bastille, should have suffered this fortress to stand. It is a place of considerable strength; quite a *place de guerre*, made as it were on purpose to overawe the capital, whose faubourgs are within the range of its cannon.

nate, with spirits subdued by oppression, and hearts broken by a sense of injustice and tyranny), we found the first court filled with artillery and ammunition, with all the frightful and formidable apparatus of warfare. Every object upon which our eyes rested was meant for the destruction of man; for the abridgment of his liberty, or the annihilation of his existence. A species of melancholy attraction rivetted my eyes upon the *donjon*. I had so often read of it; so much of that chivalrous spirit of France, which early in life had captivated my imagination, expired here; sometimes quenched by violent or ignominious death, sometimes wasted away in slow, silent, life-wearing oblivion. So much of the bold, fearless genius of philosophy had here sustained persecution, through the harassing medium of promised liberty, protracted imprisonment, and all the wearying alternations of suspense, that it seemed to me a monument of suffering, a "brief chronicle" of times, dates, and events, suddenly presented to my view, round which the associations of youthful study, maturing reason, and long cherished principles, closely rallied. There was not an ivy-twined loop-

hole, a time-tinted bastion, belonging to this frowning dungeon (so long the terrific instrument of the caprice of tyranny ; ingulfing any victim whom power, thwarting in some darling passion, might hurl into its noisome cells), but had a specific power to awaken sadness, and to rouse indignation.\*

Many, indeed, of its features still remain, to recal the sad events which have occurred within its dreary walls. The casement still exists, through the bars of which the great Condé cultivated his pinks, during his long incarceration, while his young duchess was

---

\* *Mons. de Luxembourg a été mené deux fois à Vincennes, pour être confronté. On ne sait point le véritable état de son affaire.*—Seigné] The mystery, which for some time hung over the fate of the brave Marechal de Luxembourg, was so profound, that not only he was himself kept ignorant of his crime, but his friends were in doubt, whether he was confined at Vincennes, the Bastille, or some other state prison. The crime of which this brave man was accused, who had fought so many battles for Louis XIV., was sorcery. “ *On ne parle plus de Mons. de Luxembourg. J’admire vraiment comment les choses se passent,*” says Mad. de Seigné ; and in fact, a few days after the secret imprisonment of the Marechal, the oblivion of the grave hung over the life and fate of a man who, a short time before, had filled all France with the echo of his feats.

leading the factious citizens of Bourdeaux with the intrepid cry of "*qui m'aime, me suive.*" When this circumstance was related to the illustrious prisoner, he laughingly observed, "*Qui auroit cru que j'arroserois des fleurs pendant que ma femme fait la guerre.*" In this tower was likewise confined the father of the great Condé. His original crime, and the cause perhaps of all his after errors, was his devotion to a beautiful wife, whom he refused to resign to the romantic passion of a grey-headed king. The chamber is still pointed out, which was occupied by Diderot, when he was sent to Vincennes, for the publication of his letter, "*Sur les aveugles ;*" where, goaded by a sense of the injustice, of which he was the victim, his great and luminous mind had nearly sunk under the blow ; for his reason was only saved from a total overthrow, by a timely alleviation of his sufferings.\* In this fortress also, Mirabeau, during a five years' imprisonment, wrote his beautiful letters to the frail and fair Sophie, and composed his able work

---

\* Some personal traits in his work against a Mad Du Pré de St. Maur, were the cause of his detention in this prison.

against *lettres de cachet*, of whose abuse he was himself a victim.

But while events connected with the scanty portion of civil liberty, enjoyed in France for a thousand years before the revolution, crowded upon the memory, association suddenly snapped its chain ; and our own gallant Henry V. dying in the *donjon* of Vincennes, and resigning his conquered France into the hands of his brother Bedford, occurred to my remembrance. An host of images rose with this interesting recollection, and *Hal* and *Falstaff* cheered for a moment the gloomy reflections, which conjured up their delightful vision.

Our party consisted exclusively of *ultras* and *royalists* ; and for them, and indeed for us, there still remained an object of interest and of sadness, within the dreary rounds of Vincennes, which was no phantom of memory, but had its

“ Local habitation, and its name,”

and which struck at once with its melancholy influence on the senses and imagination. We had received permission to visit the “ *chapelle ardente*,” raised to the memory of the young

and gallant Duc d'Enghien, by the Duchesse d'Angoulême. We were conducted to a wing of the fortress hanging over the *fossé*, in which the Duc d'Enghien had been shot, and which fronts the forest. The concierge met us at the door of his apartment, and lighting a lamp, conducted us up a dark, narrow, winding staircase, rendered more sombre by the contrasted brilliancy of the setting sun, in which, a moment before, we had been basking.

As we reached a landing-place, considerably elevated, the lamp's flickering light suddenly gleamed on the polished firelock of a sentinel, who guarded the melancholy post, and who carried arms to the military orders and stars of some of our company. To find an armed guard here, (within the compass of a dark and narrow space, so confined, that tired vigilance could scarcely measure its wonted pace), had an effect, that went at once to my heart; for it had never before throbbed amidst the terrific gloom and imagery of a state prison. It is not impossible that this soldier now guarded the remains of the man, whom when living he had here also guarded, during that short moment.

which intervened between judgment and execution. To him the innocent and the guilty would be a charge of equal moment, and equal interest; for the creature of force, its instrument and its victim, the soldier takes every station his trade assigns him. His very nature, broken down to the voice of command, dissolves all the feelings, faculties, and passion of man into the great and paramount law of *obedience*---to-night, in the gloom of the castellated ditch, raising his murderous aim, and reaching the life-pulse of the royal d'Enghien; to-morrow, irradiated with the glories of the rising sun, he hears the voice, he had haply obeyed in many a nobler cause, now give the word---"*My comrades, to the heart!*" and the gallant Ney falls beneath his arm.

The theme of every *soldier's* praise, over the watch-fires of distant fields, lies bleeding by the *soldier's* hand.\* These are views of human conduct; these are scenes of human suffering, which sicken the heart and wither up its powers! Here civilized society loses

---

\* The day before my visit to Vincennes, I had stood upon the spot where the unfortunate Ney was shot, at the extremity of the gardens of the Luxembourg.

its splendour, and the development of the human faculties seems but to “ multiply the power of doing evil !” The savage, whose joys and sorrows, whose life and death, are governed by the laws and passions of nature only, here, for a moment, stands opposed in proud superiority to that erring, cruel, and vain-glorious creature, to whom civilization has lent but half its light ; who, in his dangerous progress through semi-barbarism, has learned to *pervert* not to *improve* his faculties ; to tread on the rights of others, not to respect and preserve his own ; and who, substituting power for happiness, and ambition for justice, seeks to become *great*, without endeavouring to become *wise*.

To the right of the narrow landing-place, thus strictly guarded, in darkness and in silence, we were shown the little room which the Duc d’Eughien occupied during his short, sad dwelling in the fortress of Vincennes. To the left, a larger apartment, in which his hasty trial had taken place, exhibited a most gloomy and imposing spectacle. Daylight was wholly excluded, and the room was laid out as for a funeral chamber,



*une chapelle expiatoire* ; it was lighted day and night by a lamp (*la lampe ardente*), which hung from the centre of the ceiling. The walls were draped with white cloth, bordered with black ; a low ottoman, of the same texture, ran along the floor. In the middle stood a hearse, covered with a velvet pall, richly embossed in gold, with the arms and trophies of the house of Condé. It veiled a small coffin, which contained all that could be collected, from the ditch of Vincennes, of the gallant d'Enghien---a few bones. A stone on which, it is said, his head had fallen, was placed beside it. In the back of this gloomy scene, hung a massive silver cross. Twelve immense wax tapers, in large silver branches, burned on each side of the bier. To the right was an altar, a crucifix, the sacramental vessels, and all the imposing paraphernalia of the ceremonies of Catholicism. Here is daily celebrated a mass for the soul of the deceased. Here, on the preceding day, Madame d'Angoulême had offered up her *oraisons*, at the shrine of her habitual devotion. Here slumbering sorrow might be roused into ceaseless vigilance ; and

vengeance brood over images, created and combined to give it everlasting force.

The recollection of the fate of the unfortunate prince, whose unburied bones were thus placed in melancholy spectacle; the fatal policy which may, or may not, have necessitated his death\*; the *fossé* pointed out where he had been executed; the fortress itself, all produced a train of melancholy impressions, which I thought not easy to be effaced. We withdrew from the *chapelle expiatoire* in sadness and in silence; and the eyes of more than one brave and devoted champion of the Bourbons swam in tears, as we quitted the remains of one of its most illustrious and gallant defenders. But the sun was still shining brilliantly: it was a *French*

---

*Additional Note.* \*The author has been accused of passing a judgment, and acquitting Napoleon of this murder. It is however evident that she has declined hazarding an opinion on a point upon which all Europe is at present divided. The evident moral to be derived from this sad history, has been alike passed over by all: namely, that the deed, such as it was, was the natural consequence of that authority, *which considers itself alone accountable to God for its actions*: an authority that can exist, only for the torment of mankind.

sun; and we were a *French* party. We ascended our carriages; and bidding adieu to the gloomy towers of the Château de Vincennes, the coachmen, cracking their whips, soon brought us to Paris, and set us down at the doors of one of its gayest spectacles, the Comic Opera.

As we entered Mad. d'Hossonville's box, we found the delightful pastoral drama of "*Rose et Colas*" half over; but we were in time to hear Ponchard in some very pretty *vaudevilles*; and to witness the first representation of "*Plus Heureux que Sage*," a piece which was condemned beyond all hope of redemption, notwithstanding the fine singing, and the elegant and spirited acting of that most lady-like actress, Mad. Regnaut. We waited to see the first act of the old farce, "*Les Femmes Vengées*," which, by the authority of time, maintains its privilege of wearying the patience of the audience, by a succession of impossibilities, only relieved by traits of coarse humour and vulgar pleasantry. We then adjourned to the first restaurateur in Paris; where, over an excellent supper, we discussed the amusements

of the day, and decided on the merits of the *salade de volaille* and champagne of Mons. Beauvillier.

“ L’homme machine, esprit qui tient du corps,  
En bien mangeant, remonte ses ressorts.”

No one seemed exhausted, all had been amused, and the *déjeuner à la fourchette*, which began so gaily, at midday, finished as gaily at midnight. I was, however, convinced, that this genuine French entertainment was calculated only for the elasticity of French spirits, for the enjoyment of a people whose resources are infinite, and who, more animated than active, depend rather upon their mental, than upon their corporeal energies, and know no weariness, but that which springs from inertness, and the absence of intellectual occupation.

Several *déjeuners à la fourchette*, given to us by friends resident in Paris, succeeded to the *fête champêtre* at Plaisance; and, like that, they usually occupied the whole day. After one of these entertainments at Mons. Dorion’s, we spent the afternoon in visiting the fine library of the celebrated Mons. Langlés, and some other private collections;

finishing the evening at the Theatre Français. At another, given by Mons. Denon, we found ample and delightful amusement in examining the collection, which occupies his apartments. Over all these hospitable feasts great refinement of manners, and an unclouded gaiety, universally prevailed, and banished the tedium so oppressive in the morning amusements of a less mercurial people. The custom in France of *introducing conversation into society*, has a decided and very happy influence on the spirits and faculties of its members, at whatever season of the day they may assemble; and time rarely passes “flat, stale, and unprofitable” to those, whose intellectual resources engage and diversify its hours, and “make to-morrow cheerful as to-day.”

An English gentleman, resident at Paris, assured me that an Irishman, whom he had known in France many years, left his small fortune to the *only Frenchman* who had ever offered him a *dinner*; at once to mark his own gratitude, and the rarity of the event. The outcry, however, amongst the strangers who now visit Paris, against the want of hospitality in its inhabitants, is much more

universal, than it is well founded. Thousands, indeed, have visited and continue to visit France, from every part of Great Britain, who have not even been so fortunate as the Irishman already cited: but the particular position of the English, with respect to the French nation, is not, at present, extremely favourable to the interchange of the rites and ceremonies of hospitality; and at all times, the French are neither so eager after society, nor so much in want of it, as to send "into the highways and lanes," to pick up such indiscriminate foreign guests, as may be inclined to accept an eleemosynary invitation, and to satisfy, at the same time, their appetite and their curiosity.

No hospitality, and indeed no fortune, could hold out against those legions of the idle and the unoccupied, who, in the exuberance of wealth, or of undirected curiosity, leave England, to---

*Promener leur ennui ailleurs.*

The French, at all times circumspect in their societies, and averse to large and indiscriminate assemblies, have not learned to extend their circles, or to multiply their

invitations to strangers, since circumstances have inundated their capital with the people of all nations and countries.

The *obscure*, the *unknown*, and the *unnoted*, have therefore but little chance of obtaining admission into good French houses, of any party or faction, if not *particularly recommended*, by letters or personal introduction. And I have known many self-sufficient persons, the centre of their own little domestic circle, the agreeable rattles of some particular *coterie*, wounded in the very life-nerve of their *amour-propre*, on finding themselves lost and confounded among the "vulgar herd" of strangers; who through the medium of that *passe-partout*, money, are allowed a free ingress to all public places; but who go no further! These are the persons, who found a character for nationality, upon exclaiming against every country but their own; and who fancy themselves patriots, upon the presumption of their preference for home. They feel not that their *ennui* and distaste, in foreign countries, are seated within themselves; and they mistake their individual displacement for the dislocation of society.

Few persons, I imagine, well introduced by letters of recommendation, or by their personal talents, or celebrity, will join in this outcry against French hospitality; or will deny that the access to a French house, where the stranger has once been received, is both easy and gracious. It is, however, quite true, that dinners of ceremony are by no means so general in Paris, as in London or Dublin. In the latter capital, hospitality has long lost its simple character; it is no longer the medium of social enjoyment; but the lure to ostentatious competition. Few desire to entertain, who cannot dazzle or outvie. Ruin too often treads on the heels of festivity: the means and the measures rarely meet and are rarely calculated, while the spirit of display is in operation; and he, who in justice to his children and his creditors, should not even indulge in "humble port," does not hesitate to treat his guests with "imperial tokay."

The princely revenues of the English nobility, the immense opulence of the trading class of that great commercial country, while they multiplied the artificial distinc-



tions of society, permit an expenditure in entertainment, favourable to every competition of vanity and of pride. In France, where property is more equally divided, where none are enormously rich, and none (it may almost be said) are absolutely poor, the modes and habits of hospitality are proportionate to the means; and in the absence of display, they are directed exclusively by a taste for social and conversational enjoyment.

The public and ministerial dinners are like those of the same description in other countries; and the dinners of the arch-chancellor Cambacères, the hierophant of modern gastronomy, were, under the imperial dynasty, models of elegance and of luxury. Still, however, the French dinner is, generally speaking, in all its arrangements simple and unpretending. The length of the invitation seldom exceeds a few days, and is suited to the uncertainty of all things human. It has frequently happened to us to be asked to dinner, from reviews or other morning amusements, by some one or other of the party we accompanied. The additional covers were the only difference in the eco-

mony of the table, occasioned by our partaking the *fortune du pot*; and if all was not “more than hospitably good and moderately plentiful,” the never-failing excellence of the cookery, at least, contradicted the aphorism of Berchoux, that,

“Un diner sans façon, est une perfidie.”

It is a maxim borrowed from epicurism, and adopted into the code of French good-breeding, that “*un véritable gourmand ne se fait jamais attendre.*” To be punctual to the moment, is a point of good-breeding rarely neglected. The guest is received in the anti-room, by all the servants of the family; and the arrangement of the French apartments being generally *ensuite*, the *salle à manger* is almost invariably passed in arriving at the *salon*. It frequently happens that the table is only laid a few minutes before the dinner is served. That ceremony, therefore, which consumes hours in an English house, and occupies the time of so many persons, is effected with a sort of magical celerity in France. But where all is for mere use, and nothing for display, time and trouble must be necessarily spared. There

are no showy sideboards, no rich buffets, in the French dining-room; and though the table service is always of silver, yet in the first houses, ornamental plate, and articles not immediately necessary to the accommodation of the guest, are nearly unknown.

As there is rarely head or foot to a French dinner-table, the hosts generally occupy the centre. The removes are confined to the middle of the table: there are usually two short courses, with a dessert, and a number of stimulating *hors d'œuvres*, almost unknown in the economy of an English table. To those accustomed to "*raisonner principes sucrés*," the French dessert will be found, in the language of Mons. de la Reyniere, "*de parler à l'âme, et surtout aux yeux*." A thin light Burgundy is the diluting beverage, which holds the place of our malt liquor; and the superior wines are not drunk till after the first course, when the domestics serve them round. Cape wine or Malmsey are taken with the dessert. The art of cookery is supposed to have long reached its utmost point of perfection in France. It is a science, which all have studied, which all understand, but which it has been long

deemed *mauvais ton* to expatiate upon, or discuss. All such conversations are now reputed to smell of the *revolutionary times*, when the most *roturier* persons, raised from the shop to the palace, piqued themselves on the *friandise* of a table, to which they had hitherto been strangers; and were proud to display their superiority over the “*cuisine bourgeoise*,” by discussing *côtelettes à la Maintenon*, or deciding on the merits of dishes, once confined to the *menus* of aristocratic tables.

The skill and science, which our young men of fashion display at table, who wish to found a reputation by living *en garçon*, have descended in France to the *garçons*, or waiters at the restaurateurs; and I remember a certain La Croix,\* who occasionally attended our *cabinet particulier*, at *Le Gacqué's*,

---

\* Asking La Croix's opinion, upon the choice of some *liqueurs* we wished to purchase, he threw himself into the attitude of a declaimer at the Institute, and talked in terms equally scientific.—“*Tenez, madame; on doit considérer les liqueurs sous deux rapports, pures et factices. Par exemple, 'Le Henri Quatre,' et 'le parfait amour' sont factices, le curaçao et le kirsh-wasser sont purs,*” &c. &c. This dissertation of La Croix, which I took down verbatim, is almost equal to the treatise on “*La moutarde considérée philosophiquement.*”

whose oracular judgments on the dishes or wines he wished to recommend, were equally amusing and instructive; and in England would entitle him to a professorship, should the art ever be raised to the dignity of a science.

At the end of the dessert, every one rises from table; and coffee (such as Mahomet might have drunk, to dream himself into his *third heaven*), with *liqueurs pures et factices*, are ready prepared on a stationary table in a corner of the salon. This table universally exhibits an *English tea equipage*, designed equally for ornament and for use: and the silver tea urn and tea cadet are rarely omitted. A conversation of *à petit quart d'heure* concludes the dinner engagement; the carriages and cabriolets draw up; every one pursues the pleasures and amusements of the evening as he thinks proper; and no one remains where he dines, except by particular invitation, or that it happens to be the *soirée* of the lady of the house.

It has occasionally happened, that our dinner invitation has included an arrangement for a "*promenade en voiture*;" and in the fine evenings of a French summer, no-

thing can be more delicious than these after-dinner drives, taken by a large party; with which the intemperance of the men never interferes, and to which pleasure, health, and recreation, equally contribute.

One of these pleasant promenades, in which I was a party, had for its object the lovely grounds and gardens of Mousseaux; situate at the extremity of Paris, near the faubourg du Roule. We broke up from dinner at seven o'clock, mounted our carriages, and in half an hour were set down at the place of our destination; the once celebrated "*petite maison*"\* of the late Duke of Orleans, the temple of his dissipated orgies, and of his political intrigues. The house, or rather the pavilion, is of Grecian architecture, correct and chaste, even to coldness and uniformity, but still elegant. The "*jardins Anglais*," once known as "*Les folies de Chartres*," notwithstanding the occasional conceits of gothic ruins and attic temples, cascades without water, and Alpine

---

\* Mousseaux, or as it is now spelled Mouceaux, under the imperial regime was a *maison de plaisance* of the *archichancelier de l'Empire*. I know not to whom it now belongs, but its gardens are opened to the public.

bridges without precipices, are still beautiful, luxuriant, and noble; and the place, the company, the weather, the climate, all considered, few hours in my life have been more pleasantly enjoyed, than those passed amidst "*Lés folies de Chartres.*" The moon had risen on our rambles, before we returned to the hotel, from which we had set out. We found the *soirée* of Madame de C—— already assembled, and English tea at midnight concluded our very agreeable dinner party, with its "*promenade en voiture.*"\*

The French *soirée* is literally *an evening at home*. Almost every woman of condition in Paris has a *soirée* once or twice a-week. Some ladies are "*at home*" every night, or rarely go out, except to the court, to the opera, or the theatres.† During the *soirée*, visits are received and paid, as on other

---

\* The *late* hours of *new France* are much reprobated by the primitive old gentry, who exclaim against dinners at half after five, or six o'clock, and who believe that at last "*les Parisiens, à force de retarder l'heure de dîner, finiraient par ne dîner que le lendemain.*"

† We had above twenty houses open to us, on different nights in the week, during our residence in Paris, where we were always sure of being graciously received, and of finding good society.

evenings; for the evening is the usual time for paying *morning visits* in France; and once admitted to their enjoyment, no further invitation is necessary. These little assemblies, given without expense, and resorted to without form, present the state of Parisian society in its most favourable aspect. Neither vanity nor ostentation interfere with their ease and simplicity; there is no gambling, no full dress. The women go in *demi-toilette*; and as, in Paris, illumination is extremely cheap, and the apartments always well lighted, the whole additional expense of the *soirée* is included in tea, or some very slight refreshment, served a little before midnight. Society is therefore not a point of competition, but a source of genuine enjoyment. It never leads to ruinous extravagance; it is supported by no newspaper eulogies; it awakens no rivalry, and gives no heart-burnings. The lady, who entertains, does not estimate the pleasure of her party by the number of titles that fill her rooms, nor by the expensive rarities that crowd her supper-table; for wit, pleasantry, and good conversation hold an uniform ascendant over



peers, and pine-apples, chalked floors, and peas at a guinea per quart!

The weekly *soirée*, at some of the great houses in Paris, amounts to what is termed a *grande-réunion*, or large assembly; in which the coquettish *demi-toilette* gives place to full dress; and the society assumes more of the bustle and brilliancy of an English rout. A few days after our arrival in Paris, a card of invitation from the English ambassadress, and another from the Princesse Louise de la Trimouille, for the same evening, afforded me an opportunity (as I went to both) of comparing the assemblies of the two nations. We passed through long files of English carriages, which filled the Rue St. Honoré, in approaching the hotel of the English embassy: the halls and anti-rooms of that magnificent hotel were filled with domestics, in the splendid liveries of the Stuart family. Lady Elizabeth Stuart stood at the door of the first salon, to receive her *multitudinous congress*, which poured forth in endless succession, from all nations, but chiefly from England, Ireland, and Scotland: and her ladyship went through the laborious task of

reception, (in all the routine of a London assembly) with as much grace and courtesy, as if weariness and exhaustion did not inevitably attend upon such an exertion. Faces with which I had long been familiar, in the circles of London; faces, that I thought I had left behind me in Ireland, presented themselves, on every side. All was the buzz, bustle, and motion of an English rout. Every one stared, every one talked, and nobody listened. The refreshments were abundant, exquisite, and various; and an elegant supper was prepared, to follow the consumption of orgeates, ices, and *punch glacé*. Without waiting, however, to partake of this supererogation of hospitality, we passed on at an early hour from the hotel of the British embassy, to the hotel de la Trimouille.

The hotel de la Trimouille is situate in the centre of the Rue Bourbon, as it ought to be; for the names have not often been disunited.

The Rue Bourbon is a grand, gloomy, Patrician street; always the residence of the ancient nobility of France; whose venerable hotels still frown, on either side, like monuments of past grandeur. Scarcely a sound

disturbed its silence, as we entered; and the *réverbères* but feebly lighted the high, dark walls of the spacious courts, which shut in from vulgar view the residence of hereditary grandeur.

One *single rap* announced the arrival of the guests; and the *porte-cochère*, without any visible agency, slowly opened, as if governed by the wheel of a convent gate. On either side of the court, carriages and cabriolets were sheltered in the *remise*, or were drawn up in close file; and our own servant conducted us, through the silent lofty hall, up the broad stone stairs to the anti-room; where, consigning our persons and names to the guardianship of the *maître d'hôtel*, he took his own seat in an arm chair, by the stove. We followed our guide, as he flung open *les grands battans*, in proceeding through the suite of rooms.

All the apartments were splendidly lighted: we found the billiard-room occupied by players, or by lookers-on at the game, which in France is played so well, and so generally, by both sexes. We passed on to the grand salon, and found a large circle all seated; all conversing, and all animated, yet all *at rest*.

A few men only stood in groups, or, in the French phrase, *en petits pelotons*. Some leaned over the backs of the ladies' chairs, with whom they were talking. In passing on to the superb *chambre à coucher*, I observed Mons. Fievé, the author of the charming novel of the "*Dot de Suzette*," receiving the compliments of a little circle, on his new political tracts; and Monsieur de Chateaubriand, whom, having already seen at the opening of the Institute, I instantly recognized, by his folded arms, abstracted look, and air of *Arabia deserta*. Withdrawn from the crowd, in solitary magnificence, he was silently receiving the homage of some dowager-ultras; while he, who "saluted" every tree, river, and rock, from Paris to Jerusalem, seemed, in society, to hail nothing but his own importance.

We found the Princesse de la Trimouille, not bustling through her rooms in endless genuflexions, nor stationed at the entrance-door, the wearied sentinel of her own exhausting pleasures; but quietly lounging in a *fauteuil*, in her superb bed-room,\* the

---

\* Nothing can exceed the splendour and taste of some of the *chambres à coucher*, in the private hotels of Paris.

*sanctum-sanctorum* of all splendour, taste, and elegance, in the suite of French apartments. She was looking on at a game of picquet, played by two venerable dukes, covered with all the insignia of their rank; and this was almost the only card-table I saw, at any of the *réunions*, or *soirées*, which I frequented, during my residence in France.

The manner in which a French woman receives her female guests is extremely courteous and respectful; a little tinctured with formality, but marked by every feature of politeness and of attention. The reception of the male guests is, generally speaking, extremely fascinating, and yet sufficiently dignified. She never rises from her seat: she receives their profound bow with a smile, a nod, a “*bon soir*,” or “*bon jour*,” or a “*comment va-t-il* ;” or some little mark of distinction, a tap of the fan, a hand to kiss, or an expression of pleasant surprise at their unexpected appearance. All this however is

---

The walls are usually draped with rich silk or satin, fastened and decorated with gold or silver ornaments. The *couvre-pied*, or counterpane of the bed, which stands in an alcove, is frequently of white satin, richly embroidered, and trimmed with Brussels lace.

air and look ; it “ is *something, nothing* :” it is quite indescribable, as it is undefinable ; and it would be presumption to attempt it :

De la Trimouille ! Who that knows any thing of the history of France, could for the first time be in company with the representative of that illustrious family, without feeling some quickening throbs of the heart ? All that is dignified in the history of the country is associated with the name. The most powerful among the *provençal* nobility, the La Trimouilles, governed the Charles's, opposed the Louis's, and assisted to place the founder of the house of Bourbon on the throne of France. They suffered martyrdom in its cause, on the revolutionary scaffold, and they now rally round the throne of the family, they have so long fought and died to support. The Trimouilles have, indeed, done more for the house of Bourbon, than the house of Bourbon could do for the Trimouilles.\*

---

\* Many of the families of the French nobility looked upon themselves as more ancient than the reigning dynasties even in the earlier ages. “ *Qui vous a fait comte ?*” asked Hugh Capet haughtily of the Comte de Perigord. “ *Ceux, qui vous ont fait roi,*” was the bold reply.

The Prince Louis, the only surviving representative of his illustrious family, has all that distinction of person and air, which indicates birth and high-breeding; and is one of three of the handsomest brothers that France ever saw united in one cause.

The talents and acquirements of the princesse de la Trimouille give her a very decided influence in the circle and party in which she moves; and I observed that literature and politics were the leading topics of conversation, in her elegant and refined reunions.

The *bal-pâre*, a most frequent style of entertainment during the winter season (which

---

Charles VII. weary of the rule of Georges de la Trimouille, suffered him to be arrested and imprisoned by his enemy, the connétable de Lorraine.

It was in reference to the conduct of Louis de la Trimouille, who took Louis XII. prisoner at the battle of St. Aubin, that that wise and excellent monarch observed, after he ascended the throne; "*Le Roi de France ne venge pas les querelles du Duc d'Orleans.*" The Duc de la Trimouille was one of the secret chiefs of the Hugonot party, whose demands became so exorbitant on the gratitude of the king. The influence, spirit, and power of this family appear indeed through every page of the history of France. The late Prince de la Trimouille, brother to the present prince, was guillotined in the early part of the revolution.

season, *par parenthèse*, is literally celebrated during the *winter*, and never *put off* till *summer* or *autumn*), is a combination of youth, pleasure, and gaiety, exquisite dancing, to exquisite music, splendid dressing, and light collations. Little quadrille parties, suddenly struck up to the harp and piano-forte, are not unusual in families, where there are many young people; though infinitely less frequent, than such accidental breaks on the card-parties of small English circles. All the modes of society in Paris are simple, inexpensive, rational, and refined; but they are, generally speaking, less gay, less artificial; and perhaps, at once, more formal, and more easy, than the usual arrangements of society in Great Britain. Its shades, indeed, are infinite, and vary according to the rank, age, party, and means of the entertainers. Its variety, however, is not its least charm; and the characters of rank, talent, and celebrity, both native and foreign, which are met with in its countless circles, must always render them curious, interesting, and attractive to the stranger; who, without bias or prejudice, seeks in visiting a foreign land to compare its habits and manners with his



own ; and who is candid enough to grant to each nation its own peculiar merit, though still willing to cherish that natural and wise preference, leading to the gracious conviction, that

*“ The first, best country ever is at home.”*

END OF VOL. I.





